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## IDEALS AND PRACTICE (I)

PROFESSOR LEONARD J. RUSSELL.

### PART I

1. THE problem of the relation of ideals to practice comes with a new urgency at the present time. Ought we to put our ideal into practice here and now without compromise, or should we follow it as far as we are able, making concessions to human weakness? Or does it rather stand before us as an end to be achieved, so that our main task is to discover by what practicable steps we can work towards it?

The first of these alternatives may appear to be the most logical and the most noble. But it cannot be accepted without scrutiny, for it is plausible only if the ideal can be trusted to contain no error. Among those who followed their own principles inflexibly are many men who attained great power and wrought great evil.

The common argument in favour of the second alternative, that the times are not ripe for a vigorous following of the ideal, is incomplete, so long as the conditions which determine the need for compromise, and the reasons for compromising, are unrelated to the ideal itself. If the reasons for compromising are to be good ones, they must depend on valid principles, and we are thus faced with two sets of principles, one set admitted as ideal, one set relied on as valid, without any attempt to think out the relation between them. There is a lack of logical clarity in this. To take a particular instance, many people admit that the general system of principles advocated by the pacifists expresses the highest ideal, but argue that a pacifist policy would, in the present state of the world, fail to ensure some of the conditions of life we value, such as security, prosperity, freedom to live in accordance with national traditions without inter-

ference from outside. In this argument we are presented with two kinds of ideal, each accepted separately. No effort is made to bring them together. Until this is done, the pacifist principles of conduct, and the plain man's desire for security, prosperity and freedom, appear as heterogeneous ideals, each final in itself, and yet under present conditions incompatible; and the plain man has only his stolid sense of practical realities to set against the pacifist's insistence that it is lack of moral courage which prevents both ideals from being reached at once by a bold following of the nobler path. The argument needs to be restated and developed before it can be rightly appraised, and the result will at least be to transform the second alternative into something quite different.

The third alternative remains as a warning that there may be different sorts of ideal, which may stand in different relations to practice.

Thus the first step towards an answer to our question must be an inquiry into the nature of an ideal. Let us begin with some preliminaries.

(*i*) An ideal may be thought of as expressed in a set of rules of conduct, quite general and precise, absolutely valid, admitting of no exceptions; our awareness of their validity depending either on divine command, or on the evidence of reason, or on both. Principles such as "thou shalt not kill" and "resist not evil" might be regarded as part of an ideal of this kind so long as there was no possibility of doubt or error in what constituted "killing," "evil," "resistance." If there are completely valid and perfectly unambiguous principles, then it is misuse of language to speak of "compromise." If you make two and two in arithmetic anything but four you are not compromising but falsifying. And if it is wrong to resist evil, then resisting evil is not compromising but wrong-doing.

With an ideal of this kind there is only one answer to the question what we ought to do with it. We ought to obey it, literally and absolutely.

If on the other hand there is any possibility of doubt or error in regard to the meaning of a principle—if, for instance, there are undefined ways of depriving a living thing of life which do not constitute "killing," or again if it is left undetermined what constitutes "evil" or what "resistance"—then it seems equally an abuse of language to speak of a principle containing these words as unconditionally valid. An unconditionally valid principle should contain no ambiguity. There should be precise tests for determining whether it applied in a given case.

The tests might be difficult to apply, so that we might not always be sure what principle to follow in a particular situation, or again that our particular action was in accordance with it. I do not know

of an unambiguous definition of evil, but even if there were one, it might be difficult to know whether a particular situation or act was evil. Again while there is no difficulty in knowing what is meant by killing in the literal sense, it is often difficult to know whether a particular act will result in loss of life. None of this, however, affects the conclusion that if a principle is valid unconditionally it is our duty to follow it whenever it applies.

(*ii*) An ideal may be thought of as being expressed in a set of rules of conduct of a more or less precise nature, to be generally followed, though admitting of exceptions. In so far as the precise range of the exceptions is left undetermined, it seems impossible to speak of such rules as fully valid. They only approximate to validity, and there can be no question of following them implicitly. Nor can there be any question of their being guaranteed either by divine command or by the evidence of reason. They are incomplete and secondary, and depend for such value as they have on something more fundamental.

(*iii*) An ideal may be thought of as being expressed in terms of situations or states of affairs to be realized, such, e.g., as a community in which the well-being of every individual is the concern of everybody, so that all the resources of the community are rapidly used to help any distressed individual, as they are at present in the case of a motor accident; in which men are as willing to pay high taxes and to make sacrifices for the sake of the arts of peace as they are when existence is threatened by war. Or again, a state of affairs in which all men live in peace and friendliness, loving beauty and seeking truth and striving after goodness. The ideal may be put forward as divinely commanded, or as capable of being seen to be the best by some form of intuition, and will then stand unquestioned. The only questions arising will then be as to the means by which the ideal is to be best realized, and these means may have to be discovered by a slow process of trial and error over many generations. Small steps in the direction of the ideal may be all that is possible at a particular period, and it may be desirable to consolidate these steps before making new ones.

Here as before the word "compromise" is hardly appropriate. It would be applicable only if a situation more remote from the ideal than could be attained were accepted through indolence or selfishness or fear, etc.

(*iv*) An ideal may be thought of as a mode of life described in terms of principles of conduct, set before us as a goal. Rules such as "Resist not evil," "Thou shalt not kill," etc., would not be rules imperative to abide by here and now, but would describe a goal; and the problem would be that of the means by which this goal could be reached. What has been said under (*iii*) would apply here.

In a final analysis indeed (*iii*) and (*iv*) do not express different ideals, but the same ideal from different points of view, for widespread action in accordance with certain principles tends to produce corresponding situations, and again changed situations tend to make it easier for men to act in accordance with certain principles. It is difficult for a starving man to love his opulent neighbour. It is almost hopeless to preach against gambling to men whose lives are spent in drab conditions, whose working day is spent in forced labour, and who have no prospects of improving their status in industry. To change the conditions of their daily lives will not make a campaign against gambling unnecessary, but it will give it more hope of success. It is not true that men can act in accordance with certain principles whatever their conditions of life may be, nor is it true that the conditions of life determine the principles men will follow. Effort towards an ideal has to pay attention both to principles of behaviour and to conditions of life; and to describe an ideal in terms of either alone is to describe it inadequately.

There is a further point which we shall need later on, which may be noted here. Principles of behaviour do not stand alone. There is an affinity between one principle and another. It is possible to be scrupulous in keeping one's engagements and at the same time to be an inveterate liar; but we should feel a certain incongruity in such behaviour. And we expect the principles by which an ideal is expressed to have congruity with one another. Taken together they should build up for us a type of human character which is all of a piece. Indeed when we are trying to express an ideal in terms of principles, we are likely to have before our mind rather a conception of an ideal human character than a collection of separate principles. Thus for an adequate description of an ideal of the sort I am considering here, we must refer to a type or types of human character, which finds expression in action according to certain principles, in an appropriate environment. Character, principles and environment form an interlocking triad.

The three can be brought together in the single conception of a Way of Life. This is an important conception, about which more will be said later on.

Our survey of the different ways in which an ideal can be thought of has shown us two main opposite types; one involving principles to be followed here and now, the other involving a goal to be aimed at. It is clear that the questions with which we began will receive different answers in relation to these different types.

2. As so far expressed, however, the question is not put in a sufficiently ultimate way. The question would be relatively simple if it could be taken for granted that we had access to an ideal, of whatever kind, guaranteed whether by divine revelation or through

some kind of intuition against error and ambiguity, so that our only problem was what to do with it. The situation takes a different aspect if there is the additional task of the discovery of the ideal itself, and if we have to ask how we are to set about framing an ideal which will be capable of being proved valid by some kind of testing.

Consider the following instructions:

(*a*) Go straight on as far as you can, and then turn left. Go on to the traffic lights and then turn right. Then keep straight on.

(*b*) Your general direction is north. It may be necessary sometimes to deviate, but you must use your discretion about how to get back on your course.

(*c*) People say that your best direction is north. But this is not known with certainty. Better make inquiries all the time.

With instructions of the first type life would not always be easy, but our task would be plain. With instructions of the second type we should know where our destination was, but not precisely how to reach it. I believe that the third type represents more closely our actual situation, and that the task which confronts us includes that of discovering the ideal as well as of finding out how to reach it. I shall try to indicate my reasons for this, and to restate the problem as I see it.

3. It is generally agreed that we cannot get principles which have absolute validity and are at the same time sufficiently precise to be explicit guides to conduct. The rule "Go to the parish church every Sunday at one of the hours fixed for Divine Service, and conduct yourself in the way prescribed by the authorities" is an explicit guide, but has no absolute validity. The rule "Tell the truth" might conceivably have absolute validity, but it does not indicate what I am to say on a given occasion, or how I am to say it. Thus even if we are supposed to be in possession of absolute principles, a great deal is still left to the individual in the filling in of detail, and for the filling in of this detail he has nothing absolute to guide him. The main principles of conduct embodied in the Christian Way of Life are of a different type, and throw the onus of interpretation on the individual himself. Nothing could demand more interpretation than the Golden Rule, or than the principle "Love thy neighbour as thyself." In both cases the spirit in which the rule is interpreted is all important. And it is an appreciation of the Christian way of life, and this alone, which can supply this spirit. Or to take another example, the principle enunciated by Kant which says in effect that we should regard all human beings as possessing absolute value in themselves, and that this fact should impose limitations on our behaviour towards them, is primarily negative, and its positive usefulness lies

rather in an indication of the spirit which should animate conduct than in any actual direction it gives to conduct.

Thus even those who start with principles claiming absolute validity are compelled to supplement these principles by reference to the spirit of a Way of Life, which cannot be given the precision and definiteness which is necessary for absolute validity.

I think we can draw a similar conclusion, following out lines of thought suggested by some of the modern discussions of the foundations of ethics. On one side, (*a*) conduct has been thought of as primarily guided by rules, and on another, (*b*) as primarily directed towards ends. In the one case the problem is to discover what types of act are right, and in the other, what types of situation are good. In both cases an endeavour may be made to reach something basic about which statements can be made with complete certainty, and to build on this. In both cases it is clear that this can be done, if at all, only by a process of simplification and of isolation.

(*a*) Consider, for instance, a particular act. It may be an instance of telling the truth. But it is never just this and nothing more. There are many other points of view from which it can be looked at—it may be in addition an instance of doing justice, of breaking someone's heart, of revenge, of breaking a promise—it can be all these at once. Now if you ask whether an act which is all these at once is a right act, there is nothing certain about your answer. To get certainty you must consider something very much more simple, and something which never in fact occurs—for instance, an act which should be one of telling the truth and of doing nothing else, or an act of keeping a promise and of doing nothing else. In such abstract and simplified cases it may be claimed that you can decide with certainty that such an act would be right; and it may be claimed further that it is on the basis of such decisions that you gradually proceed to form a conclusion about the rightness or wrongness of acts of a more complex character. But it is not claimed that there is any way of getting infallible conclusions at the end. In the last resort, for conclusions about complex cases we need a person with a capacity for moral insight not merely into isolated aspects of an act, but into the complex network of aspects of acts found in ordinary life; and whatever certainty may be reached in regard to isolated aspects, with the breaking down of the isolation we are liable to lose the certainty also.

(*b*) Or consider a particular situation—say a person contemplating a landscape with enjoyment. No situation is ever just this and nothing more; it contains many other elements. The person my be turning a deaf ear to someone in distress calling for help, or lingering instead of hurrying to keep some appointment where he is being anxiously waited for, or storing up in his mind notes for a picture he

is painting, which is destined to give delight to future generations; and he may be doing all of these. Looking on the situation in all its complexity it is difficult to estimate its precise degree of goodness. It would only be in a rigorously simplified and carefully isolated case that anything like certainty could be reached. It may be held that only by building upon decisions about isolated simple cases can we get guidance for our decisions about the actual situations of ordinary life. But it is not and cannot be claimed that these decisions can be certain. And when we have to deal with a complex situation not isolated into a self-contained universe, but existing in a wider setting of circumstances which cause it to be followed by other situations equally complex, we are still further removed from certainty. Nor is this all. The problem of conduct is concerned not merely with the estimation of the goodness or badness of situations, it is concerned with discovering what types of act will result in such and such types of situation, and this is a question of empirical fact, liable to varying degrees of error. Thus here again, whatever might be the certainty of our initial judgments about isolated elementary situations, what we are faced with at the point of action is a decision far removed from certainty. And here again, I think it can be said, for the final determination of what to do we need a person with a capacity for insight not merely into isolated situations, but into the complex network of situations found in ordinary life.

On both views then the basis of certainty is no more than a basis, and the isolation which alone makes certainty possible has to be broken down, in order to deal with any concrete situation. In the end our decisions have to depend on ourselves, and we must bring something novel of our own, beyond the consideration of isolates.

I should go further than this. Not only has the isolation to be broken down in the end. I do not think that we can begin with it. The language used in describing acts as a preliminary to judging them ethically is itself a potent defier of isolation. Consider, for instance, the description of an act as one of breaking a promise. In isolation from some fairly detailed conception of the structure of society I do not see how you could describe as breaking a promise the act of inducing some other person to believe that you were going to do something and then refraining from doing it. A chess player tries to make his opponent believe he is about to make moves which he does not intend to make, but there is here no question of promises. Similarly in war, by the disposition of his forces a commander tries to make his enemy have such a belief, but there is no question of promises. In a society in which mutual trust under certain generally accepted conditions is not an essential feature, it would be possible for men to make promises of a kind, it being

understood that the promiser had no intention of keeping his promise unless it suited him to do so, and that the making of the promise might even be an attempt to mislead. A "promise" under such conditions would be in effect a statement that the speaker would behave in a certain way in the future, but it would not be what we understand as a promise. Making "promises" of this sort would have a certain usefulness, but there would be no justification for describing the breaking of a promise under such conditions as wrong. It is not until you assume a society in which mutual trust under certain generally accepted conditions is an essential feature, one of the conditions being that when an undertaking is given we can confidently expect that it will be kept, that there is any plausibility in speaking of promise breaking as wrong. The full judgment would be to the effect that in a society with such and such a structure promise breaking would be wrong. But a judgment of this sort does not seem to me to have any ultimacy. I am not sure that "wrong" here would mean more than "contrary to the social structure," and that is not what we want. For something more ultimate we need a consideration of the social structure itself, of the various principles which go to make it up, and of the way in which they function in man's life. In a society in which the only promises men ever made were promises to take revenge for injuries, it is not so clear that promise keeping would be right. Whether promise keeping is right or not depends on the kind of promises men are supposed to make. When, as we ordinarily do, we accept the statement that it is right (save in exceptional circumstances) to keep promises, we are thinking of what is promised as itself good, and of a society whose dominating spirit is that of truthfulness and honesty and friendly co-operation, and so on; and I confess that I feel that in isolating these things from one another we are cutting away the ground for any judgment about them. What kind of judgment we can make about them when taken together, I shall have to consider later on. At present I only want to indicate my own view, that partial principles get such validity as they have, and their usefulness as pointers to satisfactory conduct, from the fact that taken in connection with each other they express the spirit of a Way of Life which appeals to us as the best we can conceive, and which we feel would ennoble us to live. A set of principles can be connected together into a system of principles in virtue of being partial expressions of a single spirit capable of animating life as a whole. To anyone who is convinced that the way of life corresponding to this spirit would be the best, these principles will appeal as right; but it seems to me that the appeal which the principles make to us is dependent on our general acceptance of the way of life whose spirit they express. Further, I can see no ground on which it could be asserted to be self-evidently true, from a mere

consideration of its nature, that a particular way of life would be the best. The matter is much more complex than this.

A parallel discussion of the possibility of judging of the goodness of situations by the method of isolation would take too long here, and I need not enter into it for my present purposes, since it is agreed that the goodness of a complex situation is not to be discovered by adding the degrees of goodness and subtracting the degrees of badness of the partial situations into which it may be analysable. For our guidance in action what has to be done (on this view) is to estimate the goodness of the whole situation which will probably be produced by a particular set of actions, and compare it with that of the whole situation produced by alternative sets. Thus emphasis is here laid on total situations, and so far this is in agreement with the point I wish to make. There is, however, one important point to be considered. It may be held that the performance of a right act has itself no intrinsic value. If so then the problem of discovering what particular act is right will be solved by reference to the total situation following from the act, since the act adds no value of its own. It is clear, however, that among the effects of particular acts are effects on the character not only of the agent, but also of other persons. What I have done successfully on one occasion I may be tempted more readily to do on another occasion where the act is not so appropriate, and my act may induce other persons to act similarly. Hence it seems as if, when we are considering the desirability of performing a particular act, a good deal of stress should be laid on the question whether the act belongs to a type to which it would be generally useful for acts to conform, or whether it belongs to a type which would in general lead to harmful effects on the whole, even though on this occasion it may seem to be the best act. And here it seems to me that we do value certain types of human relationship, and regard certain types as objectionable. A society in which one individual issued commands, which were blindly followed by everybody else without any consideration of the reasons for them, in which in short only one person had any initiative or responsibility, would we feel be less good (other things being equal) than one in which the responsibility was more widely shared. Or, again, a society in which results were obtained by deceit and trickery would (other things not even being equal) be less good than one in which results were obtained by truthfulness and open dealings. In estimating the value of the total situation we must (it seems to me) lay great stress on the types of life lived by the persons who make up so important a part of the situation. Further, "the total situation" in our case must include the present and past as well as the future. And even though it might be argued that a particular act considered in isolation has no intrinsic value, yet it may be held

that a total situation which contains results reached by acts of this type has more intrinsic value than one which contains results, otherwise equally good, reached by acts of another type. Hence even though it might be proved that an act has no intrinsic value through being an act of keeping a promise or of telling the truth, this would not prove that the total situation which contained a predominance of truthful statements over lies, and a predominance of kept promises over broken ones, did not have a great probability of being also the better situation on this account. For acts partly express and partly tend to form character, and we do feel that the types of character of the persons making up a society have an important bearing on the question of the goodness of the society. If once more we think of the triad, types of character, principles of conduct, types of situation, as brought together in the conception of a Way of Life, then the point I want to make can be put concisely by saying that in estimating the goodness of any society what we have to estimate is the goodness of its Way of Life. That at least. Nothing less will do.

I may refer here to Mill's statement that "pleasures" differ not merely in intensity but in quality as well. When Mill speaks of a "pleasure" he does not always mean simply a pleasant feeling. He sometimes means a set of activities which are felt to be pleasant; and while it is difficult to see how pleasant feelings could differ in quality, it is not so difficult to see what could be meant by saying that types of activity differ in quality, if these types of activity are thought of as characteristic of certain modes of life. The activity of drinking beer at the "Pig and Whistle" and thumping the beer mug on the table while singing rowdy songs would not have appealed to Mill as even a minor incident in a way of life with any pretensions to quality. He would have thought that there were always activities available more worthy of an intelligent and cultivated person. He may have been mistaken; but what determined his judgment was not the quality of the pleasant feeling itself, about which he probably knew nothing, but his view of the Way of Life, and of the kind of person engaging in it, about which he felt competent to judge. His theory, however, required that it should be the pleasant feeling and not merely the way of life that had the quality, and in this he was quite wrong.

Here we have an illustration of the tendency to refer to something relatively simple, characteristics derived from something much more complex—a tendency which I think has to be specially guarded against in all attempts to arrive at self-evident truths. The working of this tendency has been abundantly shown in recent years in Geometry, from the premises of which the last vestiges of self-evidence (as understood in the past) have now been completely removed. And I think that our statements about what types of

situation are good or bad are much more closely related to our conception of life as a whole than to carefully isolated situations. Our decisions about what situations would be good seem to arise from our convictions about a Way of Life, and to be partial expressions of its spirit, just as do our decisions about what types of act would be right. A conception of a Way of Life is the common ground on which these two distinct aspects of rightness of act and goodness of situation find unification.

Thus I do not think it is true that our view of what principles of conduct are right depends entirely, as the Utilitarians asserted, on man's general experience of the consequences of particular acts. Principles of conduct express the spirit of a Way of Life just as directly as judgments about the goodness of situations. The kind of test that we need concerns the whole Way of Life. I shall have to discuss this later, but I can indicate roughly here the kind of test I have in mind. What has to be shown is that a way of life which enlists our loyalty, whose spirit is expressed by behaviour exhibiting certain principles of conduct, would if practised by men in general lead to situations which in the spirit of the same way of life would be judged to be good. Even if (as we shall see) this is not enough, still nothing less than this would be really satisfactory. We must be able to approve both of the principles of conduct and of the situations to which they lead. This by the way is one of the reasons why a high degree of scientific knowledge and of technical skill in a community seems a necessary condition of the satisfactory solution of the problem of moral conduct. No consideration of principles of conduct will help you to behaviour which will lead to satisfactory consequences if accompanied by ignorance of the forces of nature and of the technical processes needed for their control. A "right" act must always be a relevant act, in this respect.

4. The general point I am trying to make in this first part of my discussion is so important that I should like to dwell on it a little further. Consider the Golden Rule, in its positive form which bids us behave in relation to other people in the ways in which we should wish them to behave in relation to us in the same circumstances. It is clear that this rule is not satisfactory as an explicit guide to conduct, as it stands. It is useful as a protest against a line of conduct which simply moves towards a goal regardless of the consequences to other people, but even here it has its limitations. If I am acting not in a private capacity but as a representative (for example as an engine driver or a postman or an army officer or an employee of any kind) my action has to be determined primarily by the conditions of my employment. A person running for a train would naturally wish the engine driver to hold the train back, but the driver has his prescribed duties. Again, even in the sphere of private

activities the rule is insufficient. It works well enough in a society where interests are relatively homogeneous and simple. But in a complex society, where there are wide differences of point of view and taste and need, it suggests too strongly that the individual has only to consult his own tastes and needs to discover how he ought to behave toward other people. What I should wish others to do to me is often quite different from what they would wish me to do to them; and the latter is often much more important than the former. At the same time the rule to behave toward others as they would wish you to behave would be equally inadequate, though it does have the merit of stressing the need for an understanding of other people as a basis for our behaviour toward them. Further the rule as it stands gives no hint of the kind of person it is desirable you should be, if you are to be trusted to carry it out. It authorizes the quarrelsome person who loves to be provoked, to go about provoking others, and the person who hates friendliness and sympathy, to be cold and unsympathetic in his dealings with others; it authorizes the man who loves to find himself in a network of intrigue and sharp dealing, to deal with others habitually in this way.

It is in fact full of shortcomings when taken by itself. It is valuable precisely because it is not intended to be taken by itself, because it is intended to be taken along with a number of other principles which in their systematic interconnection express the spirit of a way of life judged to be good. It must be animated by a spirit of friendliness and honesty and understanding if it is to be a good rule. But even taken along with these things it would not be a sufficient guide to conduct. The Christian would say that life could have all these things and still be lacking in grace. The artist would say that life could have all these things and still be lacking in beauty. The man of science would say it could still be lacking in understanding and control of nature, full of disease and poverty and superstition. And so on. All this is true. No principle taken by itself is either trustworthy or sufficient. It needs to be interpreted and supplemented; and the only adequate basis for this is a comprehensive view of the kind of life that taken as a whole would be good, characterized both by means of principles of conduct and of ends to be sought for.

I take it that something of this sort would be admitted by those who speak of Christian Ethics. The principles of Christian Ethics would follow from, or be attempts at characterizing, the general way of life inculcated by Christianity; and the soundness of these principles in the eyes of their advocates would be determined by their satisfactoriness as expressions of this general way of life.

5. The movement of thought and feeling which I have been advocating is a movement from isolated principles to their linkage into a pattern or Way of Life, and I have been suggesting that on

the one hand the Way receives illumination from the characterization of it by these principles, and on the other hand the principles derive their final appeal to us from the call made upon us by the Way as illuminated by them. If this view is correct, then our original question about the relation of ideals to practice becomes transformed into the question of what part in life should be played by our conception of a Way of Life; and before this question can be dealt with, we must ask how our conception of a Way of Life arises, and by what means it can be discovered (if at all) to be one worthy of being followed. For there are many different and conflicting conceptions of a Way of Life put forward for our acceptance. It is to this task that we must now proceed.

6. I have argued against the view that in our study of the ethical situation we should begin with intuitions either of principles or of situations carefully isolated from any context and considered by themselves. I have suggested that our views about particular principles and particular situations are conditioned by our conception of a Way of Life, which finds partial expression in a multitude of particular principles and a multitude of judgments about what types of situation would be good, all conditioning and modifying one another. The problem of the forming and testing of ideals thus becomes that of the forming and testing of a conception of a Way of Life. Instead of simplifying the situation, it looks as if we are making it more complex. I think this is indeed the case; for if we cannot begin with isolated situations, neither can we begin with a completely formed and fully explicit conception of a Way of Life. We have to deal with a process of gradual clarification, which works from both ends at once. Modern readers are sufficiently familiar with the way in which, in a detective story, the general theory about the crime prominent in the detective's mind at a particular moment both depends on and tends to modify the view he takes of the detailed facts about the behaviour of one of his suspects. There is both mutual dependence and relative independence: the facts are always in some respects fragmentary, but they are generally capable of hypothetical completion in more than one way, in accordance with more than one theory. And they sometimes rule out a theory altogether. Similarly with our case. We cannot dispense with intuitions, even though we cannot isolate them from our conception of a Way of Life; and our conception of a Way of Life does not come to us independently of our intuitions, and is indeed modified by them. We cannot replace intuition by anything different from it in kind. We cannot test it by exclusive reference to something other than it. An intuition may carry conviction at the time we have it, but this conviction is no guarantee of the truth of the intuition. The force of our conviction is liable to be weakened when we extend the range of

our view. But we have to rely on our intuitions. All we can do is to try to relate them to one another in an ever widening view within the relevant field. If we were purely contemplative beings this perhaps would be the whole story. But we are active beings, and our intuitions refer not merely to principles of action which we judge would be right, but to types of situation which we judge would be good. And it is this which makes it possible to supplement our actual intuitions by predictions about future ones, and thus to provide confirmatory tests of their soundness.

The sort of thing I mean may perhaps best be explained by a provisional account of the way in which a Way of Life, expressed as an ideal, could be tested by means of a prediction. The test I speak of would provide only a necessary and not a sufficient condition of the soundness of the Way of Life. A Way of Life, it will be recalled, has to be expressed in terms of a system of principles judged to be right and of types of situations judged to be good, and, we have seen, of types of human character. The assertion that it would be the best Way of Life for man seems to involve at least the prediction that if all of us (or a sufficiently large number of us) were to live in the actual world in accordance with its principles, seeking to bring about the types of situation asserted by it to be good, then, to the extent to which we succeeded, our life would be judged by us to be better in all important respects than our present life: importance here being determined not only in the light of the Way, but in the light of what we ourselves should become, if we followed the Way. It implies that we should approve of the Way of Life when actually living it, and not merely when contemplating it as an ideal. It involves further that this manner of life in the actual world would not be such as to lead in spite of our efforts to situations we did not judge to be good, or such as to require a type of character which could only be produced in the younger generations by constant pressure, constantly revolted against.

But there is a further test involved, though it is not easy to see how there could be any certainty of its being applied. Let us suppose that men had come to believe in a Way of Life to such an extent that all their social institutions were an embodiment of it. They might understand the art of persuasion so well as to be able to mould the minds of the younger generations with very little strain or pressure. Behaviour would then be in accordance with principles judged right and would lead to situations judged good. And thus the Way of Life would be vindicated in the eyes of all those living it. It might be that no-one living the life ever had momentary glimpses of possibilities of other principles, other situations, or that if ideas of a different type of life crossed his mind, he put them aside as mere phantasy. Yet this Way of Life might fall far short of what is possible

for man. It might have lost many fine things a less homogeneous age had valued. And so, in our account of the testing a way of life must undergo if it is to prove itself satisfactory, we must try to leave some place for the emergence of ideals different from those generally accepted, and find some way by which they shall not be smothered before they have had a chance of being a danger to the prevailing ones. I cannot pursue the point here. My object at present is merely to give a rough preliminary account of the process by which a set of ideals, arrived at by means of a network of intuitions, can be subjected to testing by further intuitions as the result of human action.

7. It is convenient to use the word valuation to include our decisions both about right principles and about good situations. Before I proceed to give a provisional account of the way in which our valuations develop in adequacy and complexity, I note a few preliminary points, in order to obviate misunderstanding. Judgment is involved in valuation, just as it is involved in perception. We speak rightly of judgments of perception, while we do not speak of judgments of sensation. But perception is very closely connected with sensation, and indeed judgments of perception, whatever else they may refer to, at least involve predictions about the possibilities of our having certain sensations under certain circumstances. It is partly by reference to such sensations that judgments of perception are tested. Similarly we speak rightly of judgments of valuation, while we do not usually speak of judgments of liking or disliking. But valuation is very closely connected with liking or disliking; and indeed judgments of valuation, whatever else they may refer to, at least involve predictions about the possibilities of our having certain feelings of liking or disliking under certain circumstances. And here is another way by which our valuations are tested, different from the way of which I have already spoken.

A further point is important. Though we do not speak of judgments of sensation, I do not think that sensation can be treated satisfactorily independently of judgments of perception. Our anticipatory perceptual interpretations are partial determinants of our sensations. Similarly I do not think that our likings or dislikings can be treated independently of our judgments of valuation. If in what follows I stress the place of liking and disliking in my account of the way in which our valuations develop, I should not wish my account to be taken as an attempt to reduce valuation to terms of pure feeling, any more than I should reduce perception to terms of pure sensation. Feelings are dependent to some extent on valuations, just as valuations are to some extent dependent on feelings. Intellectual processes and feelings are not separate departments of mental life; they interpenetrate. I do not think it is ever possible to give an adequate account of feelings without taking account of the intel-

lectual content of the processes in which the feelings have their being. Certainly a separation between feelings and thoughts cannot be made in relation to valuation. I stress this because I do not think that the account of valuation as a simple intuition of the rightness of an act or of the goodness of a situation is adequate, any more than I think it would be adequate to describe perception in terms of simple apprehensions of features of an object. When Butler said that conscience could be described as a sentiment of the understanding or as a perception of the heart, or better, as both, he was making the same point, viz. that feeling and intellect are not separate faculties, but interpenetrate.

In giving a provisional account of the way in which our valuations develop, I am not trying to reach a definition of valuation. All I am trying to do is to see something of the general setting of active life in which our valuations arise and are modified and linked together: for this, whether or not it is of relevance for a discussion of the question what valuation is, is certainly relevant for a discussion of the question of the conditions affecting the valuations we actually make.

Liking and disliking then are not valuations, but they are very closely connected with valuations. It is necessary in our thinking both about sensation and perception and about liking and disliking and valuation to remember that they occur not as items in a pure state of contemplation, but as incidents in active social living. Things incite us to varied activities in relation to them, and it is through sensation and perception that our activities become more definite and controlled. And feelings of liking and disliking play across our experiences and activities like sunshine and shadow, some fleeting, so that we let the experience go with indifference, some more intense and lasting, so that the passing of the experience causes regret and we retain it if we can. Perhaps the most appropriate linguistic expression for what I am calling sensation is a statement such as "It is red" or "There's a noise," etc., which when it occurs as a rudimentary item in a more fully developed experience we can describe as a statement attributing a quality to an undetermined situation. Bare sensations of this sort begin to pass into perceptions when through our activities a variety of sensations, at the same and at different times, become liked together through their relation to a common situation, which thereby itself becomes characterized and capable of identification by their linkage. So that instead of merely saying "There's that noise again," we can say, e.g., "There's that man again." However else they may differ, perception at least differs from sensation in involving predictions about a variety of different possible sensations as the result of possible activities, and in regarding certain sensations as worthy of greater consideration

than others, as the basis of such predictions. I would suggest that valuation at least differs from liking and disliking in a somewhat similar manner, however else it may differ from them. Feelings of liking and disliking begin to pass into valuations when through our activities a variety of such feelings, at the same time and at different times, become linked together through their relations to various aspects of common situations. (Here again it is desirable to stress that the natural expression of a feeling of liking can take the form "How lovely it is" or "It's lovely," just as readily as it takes the form "I like that"; it is only under special conditions that these forms express different attitudes.) A passing liking for some feature of a situation may give rise to the thought, when the feature is absent, that we should like it if it were present; we may find when it is once more present that we no longer like it. We may discover, on reflexion or through a variety of experiences, that our liking for it depended on its association with some other feature. The *setting* then becomes significant in relation to our various likings and dislikings, and our various likings become in this way linked with one another. The kind of setting in which alone, in ordinary conditions (physical and social) it is possible to have a particular feature, tends to influence our attitude toward this feature. We may come to have a mixed attitude toward it; feeling that its loveliness is marred by its setting, so that we are both attracted and repelled by it. Some likings become trustworthy pointers to activity designed to produce a type of situation which will more often meet with our liking than not. We can depend on our liking certain features steadily and consistently and with little admixture of repulsion. In so far as this is the case, we are passing from simple liking to valuation, from a relatively momentary state to a more complex attitude which involves prediction. To value something involves not merely that we like it at present, but that we are confident that we shall continue to like it. In general it tends to mean more than this: it tends to mean that the normal setting in which the thing occurs is not such as to cause disliking; although sometimes we make a sharp distinction between a liked thing and its disliked setting, and make strenuous efforts to change the setting. It is here, however, that wider considerations come into play, and force us to face the question of the consequences for our lives and the lives of others of neglecting or of endeavouring to change normal settings. To take a simple instance. The normal setting in which we can have enjoyment of music is not one to call forth feelings of repugnance; but if it were the case that enjoyment of music tended to produce repugnant forms of physical disease and deterioration of character, so that it came to be banned socially and had to be partaken of by stealth and at grave risk, then our first thought might be that music would

be pleasant if we could have it by itself, but on consideration of everything that was involved in having it, we should not judge that music was good. We should regard a desire for it as lustful. No doubt it would develop its special technique, as lust I suppose has done; but it could hardly develop into great art. Thus while likings and dislikings can be temporary and arise in relation to particular features of things considered in isolation, valuations take account of normal settings, and of feelings about normally associated characteristics, and of enduring feelings.

All this I think applies not only to situations or features of situations, but to types of action and of character. We have a natural dislike for the coarser forms of bullying, and we may like some of the more subtle forms of flattery. If we come to disvalue both bullying and flattery, it is as a consequence of a long process of linkage of these things in their normal settings (including in "setting," normal effects) with other things, and of reflexion on their place in life as a whole. Our valuations of situations, actions and character tend to link up with and to influence one another; and just as the process from sensation to perception leads on to the more organized and strenuous forms of exploration that give rise to a scientific view of the world as a whole, so the process from feelings to valuation leads on to the more systematic organization of valuations into conceptions (differing from individual to individual more widely, certainly, than points of view differ in science) of Ways of Life as a whole.

*(To be continued.)*

# THEORIES OF IMMORTALITY

Professor A. D. RITCHIE

Those who have advocated belief in immortality have often spoiled their case by arguing for different theories without realizing that they were different. Those who have opposed the belief have been apt to think that when they had disposed of one theory they had done all they set out to do. The first condition for clarity of thought on the subject is therefore to distinguish the different types of theory which have been put forward. This is my primary aim in the following discussion. If, in the course of it, I speak more favourably of one theory and less favourably of others, it must be understood that this bias is incidental to my present theme, which is to examine assertions rather than to assert.

From the time of Plato at least three different theories have been put forward. There may be more than three, or perhaps one of them needs to be subdivided into two or more varieties, but three is enough for a start. I shall call them by the following names: (1) Survival, the continuation of conscious life for a period of time; (2) Perpetuity, the indestructibility of spiritual substance; (3) Eternal Life, the partaking in something strictly non-temporal, having in itself neither before nor after, so here and now as much as hereafter or elsewhere. This last I believe to be the important theory because concerned with quality of life, not with quantity or duration or anything measurable in seconds or centuries. (2) and (3) are theories of the philosophers, in the sense that they require a fairly highly developed intellectual technique for their formulation. They could not have been formulated, at least in the Western World, before Socrates and Plato, though they may have been implicit in religious experience. The theory of survival (1) belongs to popular tradition, though the philosophers have not scorned to take it up too. Along with belief in survival after death may go belief in pre-existence before birth. Outside the Pythagorean and Platonic schools it has not been popular in the West. This is surprising because many arguments for survival apply equally well to pre-existence.

Before dealing with the three theories in detail there is one thing to be emphasized as strongly as possible, that they are logically independent of one another. That is to say, any one might be true and the others false, any two true and the other false. This is one reason why it is important to distinguish them. Arguments for or against one theory need not have any direct bearing on the others.

Apparent logical connections between (1) and (2) will be discussed later.

*Survival.*—For primitive tradition and for pre-Socratic Greek theory the "soul" is a thin sort of matter, somehow mixed up with the blood and the breath and perhaps with other bodily parts or functions. The whole notion of there being a "soul" in this sense seems to have been the result of having mental images and dreams of people who were absent or dead. Hence animals, plants, rocks, streams, and places have "souls" also.[1] The Eleventh Book of the Odyssey provides the *locus classicus* for the primitive view. (If it is true that this book is tinged with Orphic ideas, that may be evidence that it is late, but equally that Orphic ideas are earlier and more primitive than is sometimes supposed.) The shades of the dead are strengthless and voiceless. Odysseus' own mother does not recognize him nor speak till she has drunk the sacrificial blood and acquired its "life" nor does the prophet Tiresias. The shades are not interested in anything but the living world. The shade of Achilles says: "Seek not to console me for death, glorious Odysseus. I would rather be on earth as the hired servant of another, in the house of a landless man with little to live on, than be king over the dead" (T. E. Lawrence's translation).

For post-Socratic thought the soul should be that which wills, thinks, or is conscious, and should not be associated with spectres. Nevertheless, ideas about survival after death have been strongly tinged with primitive views. At any rate survival is necessarily described in spatio-temporal terms and can hardly escape being thought of as something quasi-material.

The other theories are such that there can hardly be empirical evidence for or against them, but there might be some for or against survival, either from our general scientific knowledge about bodies and minds, or else from the special phenomena studied by "psychical research." Not to spend too much time on a rather minor matter, this question of empirical evidence will be dealt with summarily. Since the evidence is quite inconclusive it is easily done. As to general scientific knowledge; the extreme dependence of mental functions, such as consciousness, emotion, and memory (specially memory) on the normal and smooth functioning of the bodily organism, would make it seem unlikely that anything having enough continuity with previous life to be called the same soul could survive the dissolution of the bodily organism. There is no need to go into the points in detail; they are well known to everyone. On the other hand, it is important to realize that no evidence of this kind is very conclusive. It can always be explained away. In particular, if we suppose that

[1] Cf. William Ellis, *The Idea of the Soul*, 1940.

the bodily organism is merely the soul's instrument, all evidence of this kind can be given full weight without in any way impugning the possibility of "psychic" existence independent of the body. The evidence merely shows that a bad instrument spoils the effectiveness of the soul's action. If the piano is out of tune the best musician cannot produce good music from it, but the badness of the piano does not annihilate the music, it only puts it off to another occasion. Even if all musical instruments perished music would still exist in a sense, while there was a musician alive. The instrumental view of the relation of soul and body receives some slight support from the facts of multiple personality, because they suggest the notion of several different personalities being able to "use" one bodily organism in turns. Even this is a weak argument because the differences in the personalities may be simply consequences of partial functioning of the bodily faculties.

The evidence from "psychical research" does not at present seem to be any more conclusive.[1] It has to be admitted that a number of very queer and obscure phenomena have been observed which do not fit in at all well with orthodox theories about bodies and minds and their relations. These phenomena can be interpreted in terms of a theory of "spirits," but they can equally well be interpreted otherwise and with a saving of gratuitous hypotheses. It seems that one must accept either telepathy or clairvoyance as a fact and most probably both as independent facts. Well, granted telepathy and clairvoyance, and granted too the possibility of a certain amount of distortion of the temporal sequence of events, so that what is in the future for one person's experience is not always in the future for another's, it seems possible to account for all alleged "spirit" communications. It can perhaps be done by means of telepathy and clairvoyance without temporal distortion, or by telepathy and temporal distortion without clairvoyance. The point is that the "spirits" have never reported anything which has not been already known to some living person or about to be known in the near future or available in written documents or by means of some already existing material evidence. The so-called "materialization" phenomena, if genuine, tell one nothing about "spirits" of any sort but merely that the material world is an odder place than one had thought. The fullest admission of well-established facts of "psychical research" and even of many dubious facts does not necessitate a belief in survival after death.

If the evidence of "psychical research" be admitted as evidence for survival, and if all the alleged communications from the dead be admitted as *bona fide*, the result is not exhilarating. In the first

[1] Cf. G. N. M. Tyrrell, *Science and Psychical Phenomena*, 1938, and Harry Price, *Fifty Years of Psychical Research*, 1939.

place the world of "spirits" turns out to be strangely material, for the "spirits" move about in space and operate on material things in some direct way. What is called "spiritualism" is very like "supernatural materialism." Secondly, the evidence opens up a dismal prospect for the future life. Nothing of genuine interest or novelty has ever been communicated and the general level of intelligence seems depressingly low. Lastly, the evidence favours endurance for a limited time and not a very long one, as the most numerous and most plausible communications have been those alleged to come from the recently dead. Those that purport to come from the distant dead are fewer, much less plausible and less informative. Altogether, it looks as though the last word as to the value of survival had been spoken by the shade of Achilles.

Belief in survival is strongly reinforced by the fact that nobody can imagine a future time without himself as conscious and looking on; though of course he can think of it. But this is not an argument; if it were, it would apply to pre-existence before birth equally. So far I have said nothing about pre-existence. There are really only two things to be said. First, that anyone who wishes to advocate survival without pre-existence must pick his arguments carefully to avoid those that favour both. Secondly, that if the argument is that the soul is a pilgrim and stranger in this world, then pre-existence is a necessary part of the doctrine. This argument is the only attractive part of the theory.

The importance of the survival theory lies, not in its merits as a theory, but in the fact that in one form or another it is traditional and widely held, that Plato chose it to supply the mythological setting of his own theory, and that language intended to deal with the other theories easily lapses into forms expressive of survival. Lastly there is the point that most objections to immortality expressed by thinkers worthy of respect have really been directed against survival.

*Perpetuity.*—This theory springs from the characteristically Greek view that change, growth, development, origination, or creation is mere appearance and that the real is by its very nature eternal and unchanging. At first this view was a physical hypothesis or dogma intended for scientific purposes or for speculative cosmology. It contains indeed, though concealed by exaggeration, certain useful rules of scientific method. Socrates, or Plato's "Socrates," applied the notion to the spiritual sphere and considered the soul as a spiritual substance, indivisible, indestructible, eternal. The eternity of the soul is ambiguous; it might mean that it was non-temporal, like truth, or that it was temporal but coeval with the whole universe, or both. At any rate this is the traditional "rational psychology," the arguments for which Kant set out to demolish. He showed that

the arguments were an illegitimate extension of ideas appropriate to the physical world beyond their proper limits. The case is, I believe, even stronger than Kant made out, because the ideas illegitimately extended are not very good ones even in their own proper sphere. In fact the whole traditional notion of substance, material or spiritual, is a tissue of confusions. It would need a long book to sort them all out; a bald and dogmatic summary must suffice for the present.

It is a precept of scientific method to record and measure change in terms of something which does not itself change appreciably during the period over which observation extends. This something is a *continuant*, to use the terminology of W. E. Johnson's *Logic*. For linguistic convenience the continuant is usually a substantive, the changes adjectives. This appears to be all that scientific method requires. It does not require anything absolutely unchanging or eternal. It is a matter of indifference whether or not anything is simple, indivisible, indestructible, or coeval with the whole universe. It is important that while some things change quickly and a great deal, others should change slowly and only a little. If I use a yardstick for measuring, it does its work as long as its changes of length are negligible for my purpose. I know that changes of temperature actually alter its length a little and so do changes of moisture if it is made of wood, but if the limit of accuracy needed is one-tenth of an inch I can ignore all these. There may be secular cosmic processes which change its length continually, but if I am concerned with periods of years I can ignore these too. I know too that there was a time when the yardstick did not exist and a time will come when it will be broken; that does not disturb me either. We find a model of the continuant, not only in the persistent entities of the physical world but also in the persistence of our own conscious life and memory, against which, as a fairly stable background, changes are apprehended. But this constancy and persistence, like that of the yardstick, are relative, not absolute. There was a time, too, when my consciousness did not exist, like the yardstick, and to-morrow it may be destroyed, like the yardstick.

*Eternal Life.*—Plato probably intended to state this theory, but as he mixed it up with the other theories his statement is not clear. Spinoza, for the very reason that he repudiated the other theories, succeeded in making a clear statement, perhaps the clearest ever made. Nevertheless, the classical definition, and the one most quoted, comes from Boethius—"Aeternitas igitur est interminabilis vitae tota simul perfecta possessio." That is to say, it is a kind, quality, or intensity of life which can be possessed all at once and completely and which has nothing to do with temporal duration short or long —"one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one

day." That Boethius did not take "interminabilis" to mean "long duration" is clear from the context (*Consolation of Philosophy*, V, 6, 9–48). To come to Spinoza; on his view the soul is not an individual substance at all, but is, considered under the aspect of its thinking function, that which is also the bodily organism when looked at under the aspect of matter. In so far as we as thinking beings succeed in the effort to conceive all things as ordered and united together in God, we are thinking God's thought and thereby partake of eternal life. In the fewest possible words—"The mind is eternal in so far as it conceives things under the form of eternity" (*Eth.* V, Prop. 31, Scholium). Spinoza makes eternal life a consequence of knowing God. It might be the other way round, but that would not make a great difference, since thought is judgment on his view and includes will, and in any case seeking God must come before finding Him.

There is a rather ambiguous saying in St. John's Gospel (Chap. 17, v. 3): "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God . . ." (*αὕτη δέ ἐστιν ἡ αἰώνιος ζωή, ἵνα γινώσκωσι σὲ τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεὸν . . .*"). The subordinate clause might be explanatory, "namely that" or state the purpose, "in order that." In either case knowledge of God and eternal life are linked together. This seems to be the only place in the New Testament where there is a definite expression of the kind of view I am trying to define. However, the Second Collect in the Anglican Morning Prayer says all that is needed. "O God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life . . ." The important point is that eternal life is not automatic like perpetuity or mere prolongation of ordinary life like survival but a lifting up of life to a higher level and it is a gift granted to those who seek it.

Spinoza, like Plato, speaks always in terms of intellect. He is precluded from speaking directly of "love of God" because he has defined "love" in terms of Hobbes's psychology. Therefore he uses the compromise phase "intellectual love of God." It is possibly a happy compromise because it does indicate that there are two aspects to the search for God, affection and understanding, and that both are needed. There are two points about the meaning to be attached to the phrase "knowledge of God" that need to be mentioned.

Of course, perfect or complete knowledge of God is not attainable by man and neither Spinoza nor any one else who has used the phrase is likely to have thought it was. Even "the heathen in his blindness" who "bows down to wood and stone" has some knowledge of God. He bows to the wrong thing in the wrong way for the wrong reasons, but he does bow to something which is neither his

own belly nor another man bigger and more brutal than himself. He has taken the first step. When the Greeks substituted the Olympian gods for the old fertility symbols that was another and a considerable step. When Elijah realized that God was not heard in the storm and the thunder but in the still small voice that was perhaps the greatest step ever made. The knowledge of which Spinoza spoke and which he considered was attainable here and now is not perfect knowledge. It is inferior to that of the saints in Heaven; it is superior to that of the idolator; it may be sufficient for its purpose.

There is a certain naïvety about Spinoza's attempt, as about Plato's, to scale the heights of Heaven by force of abstract reasoning. But it must be remembered that for both of them abstract discursive reasoning was no more than propaedeutic for "*scientia intuitiva*," which was not abstract, and that both of them realized, though perhaps defectively in their different ways, that *scientia intuitiva* has an emotional aspect (*Eth.* V, Prop. 32 and corol.). Neither of them could fully explain his meaning because the resources of the Greek, Latin, or indeed any language do not run to more than a hint in the right direction. For many thinkers philosophy is a house complete in itself, but for these two the outer court of the Sanctuary.

The theory of perpetuity has been the main source of confusion in the subject of immortality. It is only fair, however, to point out that, although the supposed arguments in its favour were shown by Kant to be no arguments at all, the theory is not itself absurd or self-contradictory. It might be true. In any case it is important to consider it carefully, to distinguish it from the others and to see what it commits us to if we accept it. On this last question it is not easy to give an answer. Plato assumes that only νοῦς, intelligence, or reason persists in perpetuity, everything else belongs to the animal psyche and therefore perishes with the body. This means that sense experience, imagination, memory, emotion, and desire are all excluded from immortality. Since the time of Descartes, however, it has been generally assumed that some or all of these functions belong to the soul, and possibly only the vegetative functions are purely bodily. But what would sense experience be without the physical organs of sense, and what is imagination without sense? What are emotion and desire without the bodily functions that go with them? The crucial question though is memory. Perpetuity without continuity of memory is a mere formality.

Plato's doctrine of "recollection" as given in the *Meno* and *Phaedo* is an ingenious prop to the theory, but it definitely excludes the perpetuity of memory in the ordinary sense, as does the Myth in the *Republic*. According to him there is no conscious memory of

past lives but an implicit capacity to discern truth or principles is always present. Though the truths are there all the time, experience is needed to make them explicit or consciously realized and experience dies with the body. Actually the most important argument in the *Phaedo* turns upon the timelessness of truths and the consequent timelessness of νοῦς which apprehends them. This argument properly leads to the theory of eternal life, if it leads anywhere. I believe Plato intended to advocate eternal life and that the theory of perpetuity is an unfortunate confusion due to the influence of Parmenides and possibly the Pythagoreans. His mythological imagery too is derived from the survival theory, and perpetuity may be considered as a sort of half-way house between survival and eternal life.

According to the theory of perpetuity each individual soul is imperishable in its own right and coeval with the whole universe, so that the total number of souls is constant. This contradicts two important features of Christian tradition, that souls are created by God and that immortality is a gift of God. What has been created can be destroyed and a gift can be withheld. A theory of pseudo-perpetuity according to which souls are created but once created indestructible needs no discussion.

Perpetuity and survival are linked together in the sense that if you start by supposing (*a*) that something quasi-material lingers on after the dissolution of the body and then (*b*) that consciousness and memory survive, it does not seem much of a jump to assume (*c*) that there is also a metaphysical entity which is inherently indestructible. But the metaphysical theory really introduces an entirely new element and something not implied or even suggested by (*a*) and (*b*), which in themselves say nothing about how long survival goes on, much less that it is necessary and infinite in past and future. Something might survive for a limited time and something else be perpetual.

If the perpetuity theory is to be put forward seriously it looks as though it should go with a theory of monads more or less on Leibnizian lines. Let it be supposed that there are monads which are not entirely self-sufficient but depend for self-expression as "minds" upon co-ordinating a system of subordinate monads to form a "body." This is not an impossible view of the relation of mind and body and there is no need to insist on the pure activity of mind or pure passivity of body, provided it is understood that any kind of activity or passivity is co-ordinate. The mind-monad is not necessarily dependent on one individual body for self-expression, as for Aristotelian or Spinozist theory, but might act through various organisms which need not necessarily be material bodies of the kind we see and touch. As long as the mind-monad actually uses some

kind of subordinate or instrumental system of monads as its organism it will exist in fact; as long as it may find them it will exist potentially. Of course, this is all pure speculation, but it seems a legitimate speculation, though it is difficult to see exactly what a potential mind without an organism could be. The mind of a newborn baby is potential rather than actual, but its potentiality depends upon its organism, its body, which is actually there though not completely developed.

Perhaps it is very unfair to try to put a philosophical gloss upon prophetic or poetical utterances. Nevertheless, it is very tempting to apply some theory like that just suggested to St. Paul's statements about resurrection from the dead and the earthly and the heavenly body (1st Epistle to the Corinthians, Chap. 15). On the other hand St. Paul may have been trying to state the traditional survival theory in non-materialistic terms and in particular to overcome the crudities of belief in the resurrection of the body. Again, he uses the term "death" ambiguously sometimes to mean (*a*) the dissolution of the body, the common meaning, but sometimes to mean (*b*) the destruction of the spirit, as in "the sting of death is sin," and in the Epistle to the Romans "the wages of sin is death." If "death," "sin," and "separation from God" were taken as synonymous terms we should have the negative side of the theory of eternal life. It is certainly not difficult to read this theory also into St. Paul's statements. I shall return to this aspect of his teaching by way of conclusion, but there is still one point about perpetuity to be cleared up.

At the beginning I insisted on the logical independence of the three types of theory and the fact that they can be asserted independently or in combination. There may of course be special reasons for combining them. An argument that I can well imagine being used, since arguments very like it have been, for combining eternal life with perpetuity is as follows. Eternal life by itself might mean nothing but absorption of the finite individual in the infinity of God, and this, though possibly good enough for Orientals, will not do for us Westerners who value personality and individuality above all things. This seems to me a bad argument, for three reasons. (1) If absorption is the end, then it is the end; the Orientals are right and the Westerners wrong. Absorption might count as a fourth theory, though not quite a theory of immortality. (2) The objection to absorption is that it seems to imply the extinction or annihilation of something valuable in itself. But the theory of eternal life without perpetuity need not imply anything of this sort. "Knowledge of" or "union with" mean gain and not loss. In Aristotelian terms we might say that the "matter" of the human soul is "informed" by the Divine Spirit, or perhaps "transformed": but in any case

nothing is lost that cannot well be spared. The lump of bronze that has become "informed" by being cast into the form of a statue is, if you like to put it that way, absorbed into the statue, but it has lost nothing it possessed except its shapelessness. Of course we meet here one of the fundamental antagonisms, between those who think that "separateness" is "disunion" and something to be deplored, and those who think it is "variety" and something precious; between the Monists and the Pluralists. (3) In any case, whichever side one takes, perpetuity guarantees nothing. If my personality ($P_1$) comes to an end to-morrow with the death of my body, and somewhere or other and later on something formally equivalent to it ($P_2$) carries on its career, and if there is no continuity of memory to link $P_1$ and $P_2$, what has been gained by either of them? If I knew that before my birth there was something ($P_0$) I have no acquaintance with, what has been gained? Continuity of memory is just the point where perpetuity fails completely. The survival theory cannot make out a plausible case either because of all our faculties memory is the one most wrapped up with bodily function.

Christian tradition about immortality has been somewhat wavering and confused, partly at least because the three types of theory have been mixed up together. But there is an element in Christian tradition, and especially in St. Paul's teaching, not to be found in the philosophers, except perhaps Plato, which I have not yet mentioned and which might be considered as still another type of theory, or better as a special modification of the theory of eternal life. Spinoza's statement is as different as possible from this other modification. He considered that eternal life is attainable here and now by means of a certain kind and intensity of intellectual comprehension or insight. But Spinoza's way may not be the only way or the best or even a possible way at all. There may be others. The surest way may be through the experience of death—*mors janua vitae*. This does not mean that every one who dies attains eternal life, only that all who have made such preparation as they could can hope to attain it in such fashion and to such a degree as is possible for them individually. This is not a disguised form of the theory of survival or perpetuity. Survival means that, though John Smith died last week and his body was buried, there is now and will be on future dates, somehow and somewhere, a state of consciousness sufficiently similar to and continuous with John Smith's to be recognizable, at least by himself, as John Smith and entitled to be called by this name. So also, *mutatis mutandis*, for pre-existence. Perpetuity means that, as an irreducible fact in the constitution of the universe, there is always an entity, which may or may not always be conscious, but which, during the time he lived, could in some way be identified with the person John Smith. The theory

that death of the body may be the way to eternal life does not imply any of these assertions. That is not to say they are necessarily false or absurd, only that they are not to be inferred from the theory. All that can be inferred is, as von Hügel put it, "the most real relation between the most living realities—the human spirit and the Eternal Spirit, God."

The martyr preparing to face his last physical agony may well see death as the gateway to life. But what about those to whom death comes by way of delirium, madness, or slow decay to imbecility? This question, like others about immortality, cannot be answered confidently on empirical or *a priori* grounds. We shall each of us know at least one answer when our time comes.

# THE INTELLIGIBILITY OF HISTORY

W. H. WALSH, M.A.

In this paper I wish to discuss a problem which, though it has not in the recent past attracted the attention of many philosophers, nevertheless, in my opinion, belongs quite clearly to that branch of the subject which should rightly be called "philosophy of history": the problem, namely, of history's intelligibility. Two main questions can be asked about this which it is important that philosophers should answer. The first is that of whether history is intelligible in the sense that we can find intelligible connections between all or any of its parts. The significance of this question is apparent enough; for has not one of the philosopher's most pressing problems since Hume's time been that of whether any such connections are traceable in the world of fact? It is true that almost every theory on this subject has been put forward after a consideration of the sphere of physical nature only; but because this procedure has been universally followed, it is not therefore to be accepted as right. For history too offers us facts, and it is at least possible that these differ in important ways from those to be met with in nature, with the result that we can discover other sorts of connection between them than those which the physical sciences recognize. The possibility would seem to be worth investigation, and it is with it that I shall be concerned in the first part of my paper. In the other half I deal with the second main question about historical intelligibility. Supposing that we can (as I argue we can) find some cases of historical events being intrinsically, i.e. intelligibly related, we can go on to ask whether history is intelligible in a more ultimate sense. Is history, we can now inquire, a thing which is essentially rational, or is the rationality we can find in it of a merely superficial character? To put the problem somewhat more fully, is the historian able to do more than see intrinsic connections between the events (or some of the events) which he investigates: can he go further and understand the course of history as a whole, so that he is able to say, in the popular phrases, that history "makes sense," is "meaningful" and "has rhyme and reason" in it? It seems to me that this is a matter which certainly ought to be discussed by philosophers, if only for the assertion of history's rationality which some philosophers have made. Both my questions will perhaps become clearer if I say that, in asking whether history is intelligible, I am understanding by the term first, "such that its parts can be seen to belong necessarily to

one another," and second, "such that reason can both see why it is what it is and approve it." I should add that it seems to me obvious that the physical world is not intelligible in either of these senses.

I propose to begin by examining a view of the nature of history which has been widely accepted, and in particular seems to be assumed by many philosophers. It is important that the examination be made, for the view is such that if it were true there would be no point in asking the questions I am asking now. The theory is that history offers (or should offer) nothing more than a plain narrative of what happened in the past, a simple recital of a string of particular facts. It is the business of the historian to present these facts in their proper chronological order, to trace the exact and complete course of events; but further than this he need not go. The facts of history, on this account, may be compared to those of present sense-perception: they do not differ from the latter intrinsically (save so far as ultimately our knowledge of them depends on memory-judgments), and like them they can be used as raw material for the various sciences, physical and "humane."[1] History is thus merely a backward extension of present experience, and in consequence no special philosophical questions arise about its intelligibility. For since historical facts are, according to the supporters of this view, on an exact level with (and indeed themselves part of) the facts with which the scientist deals, historical events, like physical events, will be connected by those relations of cause and effect which it is the business of the sciences to discover. There will thus be no occasion to seek in history for any new type of connection.

It is clear that we must refute this view of history from the outset, or seem to be dealing with unreal problems. Its refutation, however, should not present any grave difficulties, once we consider the procedure of historians themselves. For can it be seriously maintained that history is nothing more than a collection of facts about the past arranged in a chronological series? Surely not. As Croce has argued, there is a difference between "chronicle," which does present the plain narrative of past facts with which our theory equates all history, and history itself. The latter offers not a plain but what may be called a *significant* narrative of the past: such an account of it, that is to say, as not only relates what happened but also tries to show why it happened. It is because of this that history requires something more than simple memory-judgments, something more even than a series of inferences from present evidence to past fact: it requires also a controlling activity of thought. By means of this the historian tries to connect his facts together so that they form

[1] For this view compare Hume's *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, p. 83 of Selby-Bigge's edition.

something like a coherent whole. Nor can it be said that he does this by simply elucidating the causal laws which produce them, and thus turning his plain narrative into a causal one. By discovering causes in the ordinary sense we are able to connect two events, or groups of events, together *ex*trinsically, but not to show some sort of *in*trinsic connection in a whole group of events; so much was demonstrated by Hume. Yet it is the latter type of interconnection of a series of events which the historian appears to aim at; he wishes to show that his facts form a unified whole, or a series of such wholes, in much the same way in which a work of pictorial art or a piece of music is unitary. That this is at least the ambition of the historian seems to me unquestionable; whether he can hope to achieve it is a further problem which we must now investigate.

That the historian, if he makes the demand here attributed to him, is pursuing a chimera, would be maintained dogmatically by a great many philosophers. According to your account, they would say, the historian aims at discovering intrinsic connections between the events he studies; but how can he hope to find such connections? Are *any* intrinsic connections to be met with outside the spheres of logic and mathematics? Does the historian really claim that we can see the logical ground of some event in some other or others, and if he does is not the claim manifestly false? And if he says that he makes no such claim, on what connections can he fall back but those of efficient causation, defective as these may be from a logical point of view? Has he not a choice between these and nothing?

To answer this objection we must examine the sphere of history more closely. What is that of which history treats? It is, in the first place, the past. But history is clearly not concerned with the whole past. We speak indeed of such things as a "history of the rocks" and a "history of the universe"; but we do not expect the ordinary historian to deal with them. The first he leaves to the geologist, the second to the astronomer. What then is that which is examined by the historian in the true sense of the word? It is not the past pure and simple but the human past; history is the history of human beings. I think we can safely say that except where we are dealing with human beings there is no history proper; though there may very well be "chronicle" and perhaps also "historical science."[1] And we can go further than this, and say that except so far as we are dealing with the *actions* of human beings there can be no history. Aristotle long ago said that the sort of thing history talked about

[1] I introduce this term to mark the distinction, pointed out to me by Professor Price, between such things as a "history" of the rocks and a "history" of the weather. In the latter case we can construct only a plain narrative of successive happenings; in the former, where the operative laws are better known, we can produce a causal narrative. But in neither case do we get history proper.

was "what Alcibiades did or had done to him"; but this can only be accepted as a true designation of its sphere if the first part is emphasized. The facts that Alcibiades had, for example, a loud voice and hairy legs (if indeed he had either) do not concern the historian, except so far as they affected what he did. It is with his doings and those of others that he is primarily occupied.

Now this fact (if fact it is) is of crucial importance for the problem we are considering. For an action is a peculiar sort of thing. First, it is the introducing of a change into the physical world, an event occurring at a particular time and place. But secondly, it can be said to be, in quite a natural sense, the translating of some thought—that to which the agent intended to give effect—into reality. We are accustomed to think of events in the physical world as all falling under general laws; but this does not prevent our also believing every physical event to be sharply separate from every other. All physical events are related, according to our common assumption; but the relation is only the extrinsic one of ordinary causation. Even in cases where the operation of the same causal law or group of causal laws produces a series of either wholly identical or progressively changing events, we still maintain our view; we do not hold that the members of such series necessarily belong together except so far as the existence of the earlier ones causally necessitates that of the latter. We think of such series, in fact, as aggregates rather than wholes, though they are aggregates of a peculiar kind. And this account we are prepared to apply to the events with which history deals, so far as what Professor Collingwood has called[1] their "outsides" are concerned. But a historical, as opposed to a purely physical, event has an "inside" as well as an "outside," and this indeed is what is important about it. Its "inside" is constituted, as I have indicated, by the thought or idea to which the agent intended to give effect when he acted. Now thoughts are very different from events in the physical world. In the first place, they have a potentially universal character which is not possessed by physical happenings. There is no reason why you should not think a thought which is identical, in whole or in part, with what I think; and there is no reason why I should not think to-morrow just what I am thinking to-day. And this fact is not without importance. For it means that events which, from the physical point of view, are quite separate (happening as they do at different points of space and time), may nevertheless stand in close connection because of the identity of the thought which lies behind them. In such a case it would be natural to hold that the events in question were intrinsically related. And secondly, where the thought behind one action is not identical

[1] In his British Academy lecture on *Human Nature and Human History*, pp. 12 ff. My debt to this in the first part of the present paper will be obvious.

with that behind another, the two may be connected together in a way quite different from any we meet with in the physical sphere. The two actions may be connected as parts of the realization of a single consistent policy, and the ideas behind them, whilst not identical, may reciprocally determine each other. Thus, where we have before us a series of such actions, the later members will be what they are because of the earlier; but the earlier actions themselves (and this is the important point) will take the form they do take because the agent intended to carry out certain other actions later. A series of actions of this kind, then, will be much nearer a whole than an aggregate, and its members can be said, in a proper sense, to be intrinsically connected.

If I am right in my arguments, the fact that history is properly about human actions means that the historian is able to find in the field he studies some instances of a kind of connection which is not to be met with in the sphere of physical nature.[1] For the thoughts which constitute the "inside" of different historical events are capable of relation in ways fundamentally different from that of efficient causation. Upon this basis I should like now to try to explain, in more detail than was possible in my first preliminary sketch, the manner in which the historian attempts to make what I called a significant narrative out of the facts which form his raw material.

I have already said that what the historian would like to do is give such an account of his facts that we should see not only what happened but also why it happened. If he were to do this in a completely satisfactory way, I suggest, he would have to find an idea or connected set of ideas in the light of which all the events of history were intelligible. History as a whole would then be shown to be the progressive realization of such an idea, and its separate events to be necessary components in the process. Now of course there have been historians (admittedly of a philosophical turn of mind) who have thought they could find such an idea: Hegel is the most famous of them. But the attempt is surely doomed to failure. For quite apart from the colossal difficulty of connecting up all the events of history under a single idea or group of ideas, the task itself is such that it cannot be accomplished unless we are prepared to treat history as a process which is, at the time we write, completed. If we are to explain the whole of history we must think of history as a whole; and in this connection it is interesting to notice that one of the stock objections to the Hegelian philosophy of history is that Hegel

[1] I identify the sphere of physical nature here and elsewhere with the sphere of physics; perhaps rashly, since organisms are natural entities, and, as Kant made clear, cannot be explained by purely efficient causation. But even with biologists teleological judgments are not, apparently, popular.

looks at history as culminating in his own age. This is (to say the least) a mistaken point of view; and the lesson to be drawn from it is that if the historian is to succeed it can only be by moderating his ambitions. He must try to explain, not the whole of history, but only a part of it, a part limited both in time and space. In other words, he must make use of the conception of historical periods, and attempt to find intelligibility within these. His idea of what periods to work with need not, of course, be other than fluid; for a period of history, after all, is a product of external reflection: there are no real breaks in the stream of events to correspond to what we term epochs. But with some periods I think he must work. And this has an important consequence for our present subject. Just because a "period" is an arbitrary and not a natural unit, the intelligibility which we say that the historian seeks can never be more than partial. It cannot be more than this because, in beginning from a certain point and ending similarly, the historian sets out from a datum which is not explained and ends with a set of facts which can only be fully understood if we consider their consequences. The historian has to behave as if his unit of study were self-contained, and this no historical period is. But, as we have seen, periods cannot be dispensed with in history.

So much for this preliminary point. The historian, if I am right, must try to make a coherent whole of the facts of an arbitrarily selected period. How does he set about doing this? I suggest that it is in some such way as the following. He first of all surveys the events of the period he has chosen and tries to connect them together under certain leading ideas. The kind of connection which is looked for here is that which has been explained a page or two back: it is the intrinsic kind of relation which holds only between actions. Dealing as he is with a group of actions, the historian tries to find unity in it by looking for some unity of thought which pervades it. To use language which was made famous in a different connection by Whewell and Mill, he "colligates" different events according to "appropriate conceptions." This business of colligation has in fact an importance in history which is not generally realized, and its use is illustrated by a host of historical phrases like "the Industrial Revolution" and "the Enlightenment." Without colligation history proper would be quite impossible. And colligation, as Whewell said, requires "appropriate conceptions." These—the leading ideas I have referred to above—must themselves be related to one another if we are to have a coherent picture of the period as a whole; and it is to this task that the historian must next proceed. He must try to find interrelations between his leading ideas or, as we may term them, "dominant concepts," so that they do not form a confused jumble. The less he succeeds in finding such interrelation the less his chances

of finding intelligibility in his facts. When the process of interrelation is complete, the third and final stage of the historian's task begins. He must write a narrative of the individual events of his period which shows them to be intelligible in the light of the dominant concepts he has discovered. If he has done his work well this narrative will reveal that those events do make up something like a coherent whole. The measure of the historian's success, we may say, depends on two factors: first of all, on the degree to which he manages to find ideas which colligate a considerable number of events and can themselves be shown to be related; and secondly, on the extent to which he can demonstrate that all or most of the events of the period are intelligible in the light of them. If in either respect he fails he will not have achieved his purpose; though the fault, in the case of the first factor at least, may not be his but be due to the facts themselves.

The making of this admission may conveniently afford a point of transition to the consideration of some objections which must have occurred to most readers. The main criticism which will be made of the theory I have suggested is that it is of a far too rationalist character. In assuming that the historian is properly concerned with human actions, and that an action can be said to be the translating of some thought or thoughts into reality, I have neglected entirely the fact that history is played against a background which is non-rational. And this, it will be said, is a very important omission, since the non-rational background to history affects the course of history to a large extent and cannot be left out of consideration when we are trying to account for things happening as they did. Again, it may be suggested that my theory is false because it assumes that we can colligate different actions in the way outlined; but is not this to imagine that men act in a far more deliberate and consistent manner than they in fact do?

The first point I wish to make clear in reply to this is a very important one. It is that, despite first appearances, I am not advocating an idealist or rationalist theory of historical interpretation. It seems to me that the sort of account I give could be made to fit in with all types of interpretation, materialist just as well as idealist. This may sound paradoxical, but it is not intended to be so. I maintain the position because it seems to me that the historian might set about making sense of his facts in the way I have suggested whatever the ultimate source of the dominant ideas of which history is the realization. It is no part of my theory that these ideas necessarily proceed from reason; they may very well have non-rational causes, and in many cases ostensibly have. Thus a great deal of the recent history of Europe might be made intelligible by colligating successive events under the concept of the domination of the conti-

nent by Germany without our having to suppose that the pursuit of this idea by Herr Hitler and his associates was not conditioned by irrational factors. The question of how far the leading ideas with which the historian works are rational is, in fact, not germane to this part of my paper; it belongs to the second part of my main problem, and an attempt will presently be made to deal with it. But the other objections are perhaps not so easily disposed of. They suggest, first, that the non-rational background to history not only conditions what ideas are realized but also constantly intervenes in the process of realizing these ideas; and second, that for some periods at least ideas cannot be found to colligate any considerable number of events, for the simple reason that no general purposes were being forwarded at these times. What are we to say about these?

I think it must be admitted that the influence of the non-rational background to history is not confined to conditioning the conception of general purposes; it is effective too throughout the realization of those purposes. We are all familiar with the way in which factors which do not in the least fall within our control (such as the state of the weather) have an important effect on the course of historical events. Our purposes are frequently thwarted by material conditions, or again are not realized because of some whim of our own which arises from non-rational factors in our selves. These facts cannot be doubted, yet it is questionable whether their admission upsets our whole theory. For (i) in planning a policy an agent does try to take into account the probable effect of non-rational factors; his ideas are not the productions of a reason so pure that any contact with the empirical would defile it, but are rather adapted to specific circumstances. And they are constantly modified as circumstances change. This means (ii) that while the influence of the background to actions cannot be discounted, it may not be such as to sever the intrinsic connections we have alleged to be present in them. Those connections may not be so clear-cut as our theory originally suggested; but that is not to deny that they are there. But are they? Is this assumption that history can be understood as a series of "policies" at all defensible? Are there not whole periods of history (e.g. the 3rd century A.D.) which it is very difficult to explain in this way, simply because no general ideas were being realized? Here again I am willing to admit the general plausibility of the objection without agreeing that it overthrows my theory. For it seems to me by no means necessary to hold that the ideas which historical personages are occupied in realizing are always, or even often, explicitly before their minds; and the fact that in any particular period we find it very hard to colligate the different events does not show that eventually we may not find "appropriate conceptions" to connect them together. It seems to be at least plausible to hold that there is a

great deal more system about a man's life than appears on the surface; and the same may be true of historical periods. But just as there are chaotic men, so perhaps there are chaotic ages.

These rather unsatisfactory remarks must suffice for a reply to possible criticisms, and the first part of the paper can now end with the claim that we have been able to discover some intrinsic connections in the sphere of history, and that the assumption that there are such connections is essential for the historian if he is to make an intelligible whole out of his facts. These connections, it may be remarked in passing, are neither like the extrinsic relations of cause and effect which are postulated in the sciences, nor yet like those logical relations of ground and consequent which are to be found in pure mathematics. The members of a group of actions are intrinsically connected because they are parts of a whole, and determine each other reciprocally, at least to some extent. Thus our theory escapes the objection which was brought against it at an early stage in the discussion.

I proceed now to the second part of my examination of the question of history's intelligibility, and perhaps I should begin by making clear exactly what it is I am going to ask. In the first part of the paper I claim to have shown that history contains some examples of intelligible connections. Because of this the historian is able to make intelligible the facts of a given period. The fact that he does, as was argued, have to work within circumscribed limits means that there is a sense in which he can only aim at partial intelligibility; but within those limits he may nevertheless make his facts a more or less coherent whole. Now the question I wish to ask is whether this shows that history is an intelligible thing in a more ultimate sense. Is history, as some philosophers have claimed, a rational process in the sense that reason can see why it is what it is and approve it? In other words, can the course of history be shown to proceed from reason?

It is easy to see that, on my view, this question is really about the ultimate origin of the ideas or thoughts of which I say that history is the realization. Are these rationally grounded or the product of non-rational factors? To answer this we have in fact to evaluate different theories of historical interpretation, for these are theories about what makes history take the course it does. I shall consider three such views—the materialist, the psychological, and the idealist —and take them in the order named.

To begin then with the materialist theory. This is a general name for a view which has appeared in more than one guise in the course of history. It is to be found, for instance, behind the famous last chapter of Herodotus: *φιλέειν γὰρ ἐκ τῶν μαλακῶν χώρων μαλακοὺς*

*ἄνδρας γίνεσθαι.* Men's courage (and therefore the ideas they conceive) are, according to the theory here suggested, the product of the material conditions in which they live. Similarly, theories which interpret the course of history as taking the shape it did because of variations in climatic conditions, such as that of Buckle, are materialistic in character. But the most famous example of this type of view is, of course, the so-called economic theory of historical interpretation. This is itself current in a number of forms, some of which are on the face of it anything but materialistic, varying considerably in subtlety and value. Its most celebrated exponents, however, are of course Marx and Engels, and it is their form of the theory that I shall examine. By considering a more or less well worked out version of historical materialism we should be able to form a sound estimate of what is true in it.

Here I can give only a short summary and criticism of the argument Marx and Engels put up. As I see it, they may be said to have begun from the view that, if we are to understand human institutions and historical changes, we must remember above all else that society exists for the sake of production: its first aim is to maintain life and enable it to be reproduced, Now in the practical problem of production two sets of factor are involved: man and the material conditions in which he lives. Of these the latter is the more important, or rather the more fundamental. Human relations—economic, political, social, and cultural—all revolve round the *Produktionskräfte* or forces of production at the disposal of society. It is not altogether clear (as we shall see presently) exactly what is to be included under this head of *Produktionskräfte*; but the nature of some things which should be is not doubtful: among them, the economic resources (raw materials) of a country, and its geographical and climatic conditions. Every society, then, has a production problem to solve, and the determining factor in the solution is the state of the forces of production. It is from this, according to Marx and Engels, that the "relations of production" follow: upon it, that is to say, that the economic structure of society, and, for example, its division into capitalist and wage-earning classes, are consequent. And the state of the relations of production determines, more or less directly, the whole organization of society—its social groupings, its culture, its law, even its science. Thus the forces of production are, on this view, of the last importance in accounting for the condition of society at any given date. And they are of similar importance in explaining the changes a society undergoes. For they are conceived not as static but as in a constant state of "development," and as they develop they put the existing relations of production out of date by changing the society's production problem. And this leads in the end to violent revolution, brought about by the dialectic of the class

struggle, as a result of which new relations of production are set up. The process then begins again. It is not, however, thought of by Marx and Engels as incessant; for in the end a state of society arises —the classless communist society—in which apparently the forces of production are dominated and their development controlled, and men are then free to make their own history.

In this theory we have about as clear an account as could be given of the operation of material forces in history. It is not, however, as should be noticed from the first, a fully materialist theory. For one thing, the last sentence of my summary shows that Marx and Engels contemplate the possibility of there coming a time when the forces of production will cease to dominate the course of history; and, for another, the phrase "forces of production" is itself far from clear. There is no doubt that these were sometimes thought of as including certain factors, such as "science" and "technique," which ought to be classed not as material but as "ideal" in character; and indeed it is largely by the operation of these "ideal" elements that the forces of production develop in the way that we have seen they do. It is very difficult to see how, of themselves, the material forces of production could be said to "develop"; yet if they do not the whole Marxian account falls to the ground. They must then change because of something which men do to them. But it is important to notice that even if this is admitted the general theory is not refuted. For it may still be claimed, and with some plausibility, that the material factors among the forces of production control, in an important way, the development which the whole set of forces undergoes; and thus the materialist basis of the argument is maintained. This is the line which I think anyone defending Marx to-day would take.

Before criticizing the theory before us let us consider the effect which its acceptance would have on our problem of the ultimate intelligibility of history. I think we should have to agree that, if the Marxian view is correct, history is not intelligible in the second of our two senses. This does not, of course, mean that we should have to abandon what was established in the first part of the paper: the doctrine of intrinsic connections between events would remain. But the partial intelligibility this gives to a historical period would now be seen to be of a superficial nature. For a further account could be given of the dominant ideas which are realized in history, an account which did not refer for their origin to the sphere of ideas. If Marx and Engels are right we could go on to show that those ideas are not in any final sense the product of reason; rather they are caused, in a more or less remote way, by the state of the forces of production which obtained at the time which the historian studies. And if this is so the real explanation of why history took the course it did would

lie, not in the dominant ideas of which we have spoken, but in their ultimate material conditions. Now it would presumably be possible to state the way in which those material conditions determined men's actions in a body of causal laws of the scientific type, a body of laws which would perhaps constitute the "science" of history. But it is apparent that if we did this we should be making out that history is, in essentials, no more intelligible than physical nature, and we stated at the beginning that physical nature is not strictly intelligible at all.

It is clear from this that the question of whether historical materialism, in the Marxian or any other form, is true, is all-important for our purposes. We must now try to decide it. I am inclined to think that whilst the view that the material elements to which Marx refers constantly condition human action cannot reasonably be denied (for, after all, the world in which we act is material), the decisive part of the theory, that *all* action is ultimately explicable by reference to the forces of production, is by no means so plausible. Marx and Engels argue that, "in the last resort," the whole of a society's history is to be understood by reference to its production problem. This is what I find difficult, at least where we are dealing with the history of developed societies. The doings of a nomadic tribe, it is true, or of a very poor people compelled to devote all its efforts to the struggle for existence, are largely intelligible in the light of their material conditions; though even here there are factors, such as queer religious beliefs and superstitions, which cause behaviour which is not apparently explicable, even "in the last resort," in economic terms. But when we turn from such primitive communities to the history of developed societies, the plausibility of the Marxian view fades. For in such societies it seems perfectly plain, first, that (as Marx would admit) men can set themselves other ends than economic ends, and, second (what he would not admit), that those ends are in some cases not ultimately dependent (except in a very unimportant way) on economic conditions. We certainly think that civilized men can pursue ideals which conflict with their own economic advantage, and even think it possible for a whole State to take action for the sake of some non-economic purpose, e.g. to defend its honour or to promote a better international order. It may be, of course, as Marx would argue, that we are wrong in holding these beliefs, and that the actions referred to are, respectively, the pursuit of a class interest and the carrying out of an "imperialist" policy. But I confess that I do not find this analysis wholly convincing. As Aristotle said, society comes into existence to deal with a production problem, but continues to be for the sake of the good life. Far as we may be to-day from the realization of such a life in society, I think there is more truth in Aristotle's statement, even

when applied to our sort of community, than Marx was ready to recognize.

The position can now be summed up as follows. The Marxists are right in calling attention to the very important part which is played in history by economic factors, and in pointing out that all historical actions take place against a certain material background. The nature of the latter in all cases conditions, and in some actually determines, what men do. But in the case of developed societies at least it does not fully explain the course of history, even in the sense of "explanation" which it is proper to ascribe to causal elucidations. For it seems that men can embody in their actions thoughts which are, at least in essentials, independent of economic causes. It is because of this that we may still be able to claim a little real intelligibility for history.

First, however, we must consider another theory, though fortunately it will not be necessary to spend any great time over it. This is what I call the psychological view. Its argument runs parallel to that just examined, but diverges from it in finding the ultimate causes of human actions not in material factors but in certain non-rational psychical factors. It is because of these, we are told, that men act as they do, and the explanation of history can therefore be found in the laws of psychology. And since these do not differ in logical value from the causal statements of the physical sciences, this theory too makes out history to be ultimately unintelligible.

It is clear enough that there is some plausibility in this point of view. The psychological theory throws light on a considerable amount of human action, and particularly if we consider the factors to which it calls attention as determining not every single thought a man thinks (that would destroy all continuity in thinking, and thus defeat itself), but only trains of ideas of an appreciable length. That is to say, it is most effective if we are willing to allow that reason possesses a sort of autonomy of its own, but is nevertheless really "the slave of the passions." Often enough in our own experience we come across courses of action the separate parts of which seem to cohere and be intrinsically connected, but which we think of as a whole as resulting from irrational prejudice or some even less creditable motive. We are all familiar with the character which possesses what Aristotle calls δεινότης, an unmoral cleverness in attaining an end fixed for it by desire. From one point of view we might say that persons of this type act rationally, since they take rational steps to attain their aim, but we should deny that they were rational in a more ultimate sense.

Despite these facts, I think it is plain that if the psychological theory is seriously put forward to explain history, it can be seen to be quite inadequate. For, in the first place, it makes no attempt to

allow for what has been established by the materialist view; yet history, after all, is played against a material background. Secondly, it offers no account of historical change. It refers to non-rational factors in human nature for the explanation of why men have acted as they have; but, unlike the Marxist theory, it recognizes no development in its ultimate moving forces. But its principal defect is one which it has in common with the materialist view (and this is why a combination of the two cannot be fully effective): it is in conflict with the supposition we all make (except when we are defending a philosophical theory) that human beings can (and sometimes do) perform actions which are essentially rational. When we are acting morally, at least, we believe that our act is neither done to gratify some secret non-rational desire nor forced upon us by material circumstances, but that we are striving freely to promote a principle or end whose value we rationally recognize. And so long as we believe that such action is possible (however few we may think the actual examples of it) we cannot acquiesce in theories like that we are considering. But that is not to say that we cannot learn something from the latter, just as we learned something from the materialists. We can learn that human action is always conditioned and sometimes dominated by a non-rational psychical background, as well as by material elements. But we should not take this as proof that there is no rationality in history.

How far, then, *are* the ideas to which men strive to give effect in history rational ideas? The idealist theory of historical interpretation, which remains for consideration, would perhaps like to say that all those of our ideas which actually achieve realization are ultimately of this nature. But if anyone did say this it would be difficult, in view of our previous conclusions, to take him seriously. Quite plainly, some historical ideas which have been put into practice cannot be said to have proceeded from a rational source. That history takes place against a non-rational background must once more be emphasized: we do not live in a Kantian kingdom of ends. The idealists are therefore driven to saying that it is only the *main* ideas of history which are of an essentially rational type. Because of this history is intelligible in principle, a thing in which we can see a certain amount of reasonableness, though it may not be as much as we should like. This sounds attractive; but the details of the theory, as stated by Hegel, its greatest proponent, are disappointing. Hegel argues that, in considering the question of history's rationality, we can neglect the apparent sources of the ideas which inspired men and pay attention only to their content. We can then see that the more prominent figures in history have been more than they themselves knew, instruments of a purpose which was not their own. Thus Caesar and Napoleon were, to all appearances, dominated by

ambitions which sprang from non-rational factors in their selves; yet from the philosophical standpoint their actions may, despite that, be regarded as eminently reasonable, and they themselves be thought "world-historical" men. The theory is that there is a rationality in the course of history which reason itself is capable of apprehending. But the question arises, *how* do we grasp this rationality? Two alternatives seem to be possible. Either we say that the rationality of the various ideas of which history is the realization is apparent in themselves, or we hold that we can see them to be rational thanks to there being manifested through them something whose nature is rationality. To the first of these the objection may be made that it is very difficult to see how an idea which is, as some successful and important historical ideas have been, itself the product of non-rational causes, can be said to be truly rational; to the second, that it involves a claim to insight into a supersensible sphere which it is not at all easy to justify. The Hegelian view would thus seem to be vulnerable on both suggested interpretations of it.

If we agree to this conclusion, must we abandon all hope of finding rationality in history? I do not think we are necessarily forced to this extreme position, because it seems to me that there is still one type of argument to which supporters of rationalism can appeal. They can call attention to the fact of moral action. In acting morally a man strives to give reality to an idea which is, to a very important extent, produced by reason itself. Reason tells him that he must act in accordance with a certain principle, the rationality of which he can apprehend, and though the situation in response to which he acts is not itself the product of reason (save so far as it is brought about by previous rational acts), the character of what he does is determined in a vital respect by reason's command. And if he succeeds in carrying out his intention—a matter over which, as we shall see, new difficulties arise—it looks as if his action can properly be said to be rational.

If this account of the rationality of the moral life is accepted (its acceptance involves the rejection of all naturalistic theories of morality), we can claim that history can be shown to be intelligible to just the extent to which we can recognize that the ideas of which it is the realization are moral ideas.[1] But is it not obvious that history does not consist exclusively of actions embodying ideas of this type? No doubt it contains some examples of moral action, and no doubt a moral action is possible in every historical situation; but quite plainly the proportion of actions of this kind which are to be

[1] It may be thought that the confining of rational action to moral action is too dogmatic. But what other truly rational action can be pointed to? I do not deny that we sometimes say that a man acts rationally when he takes rational steps to attain whatever end he has set himself, but this is not the sort of rational action in which I am interested here.

found in history is very small. It is certainly too small to warrant our declaring that history is an intelligible thing in the second of our two senses.

This then must be the conclusion of the second part of our inquiry. History, according to the argument stated, would only be intelligible if it could be shown to be moral, and it is not alas! so moral as we should like it to be. A great part of it can only be "explained" if we refer to material and psychological causes. Of course, we may think, with Hegel, that there is some sense in which even actions which we refer to these grounds are rational; just as we may take the Hegelian view that there is a sort of intelligibility in nature if only we can get at it. But if we are not prepared to accept this we must acquiesce in the results of the present discussion. And even these results need modification in the light of certain further difficulties a brief mention of which cannot in honesty be forborne. I have spoken as if all moral action were rational, and said that if we could show that the ideas which lie behind history were moral we could find history intelligible. But the matter is not quite so simple as this. For first, it is a fact that we sometimes try to act according to rational principle but nevertheless fail, through lack of moral insight or judgment. So not all action which we should be prepared to describe as moral (because done from a good motive) is necessarily rational. And secondly, even though our moral insight and judgment are correct, there may be difficulties about carrying out our ideas. A little reflection on the process of giving effect to ideas in action suffices to show that to want to carry an idea out and to be able to do so are very different things. Before we can make our ideas real we have to amass behind them sufficient force to overcome the partisans of rival ideas. But it is clear enough that this amassing of force behind an idea is not a purely rational process. Of course it can be: we can be brought by rational means to see the value of an idea. But the history of propaganda shows that conversion of this kind is all too infrequent. One would almost say that the normal means by which causes made converts were by appeals to men's hopes and fears, prejudices and passions; by the use of catchwords, misrepresentations, and lies. Certainly many causes the excellence of which is unquestioned have in the past relied on such methods.

These considerations make the chance of finding real intelligibility in history dwindle almost to vanishing-point; though they do not, if I am right, affect the doctrine of intrinsic connections which was argued for earlier in the paper. And this may seem a discouraging issue to our investigations. But perhaps we can find comfort in the thought that we can do something to alter the situation so far as future generations are concerned: we can make the history of our own time more reasonable the more we ourselves live in accordance with reason.

# THE NATURE OF TRAGEDY

## A PSYCHOLOGICAL ESSAY

A. H. B. ALLEN

THE nature of tragedy has always been felt to be a problem, not only by the philosopher, but also, and perhaps even more, by the ordinary man. The question so often asked is: why, if there is so much suffering already in the world, do we want to go to a theatre or read a story describing more suffering? Why indeed should the spectacle of suffering ever be pleasing to us? Yet it is obvious that large numbers of ordinary people do like reading or seeing tragedies; and that there are some tragedies which are generally judged to be the most valuable works of literary art ever produced. What then is the nature of the value which we extract from these works? That is the question to which I would like to address myself.

Very much has of course been already written on the subject. At one time the tendency was to treat it as a part of philosophy, and link it to a general metaphysical theory of the universe. Thus we find Hegel treating tragedy as an example of a conflict between two partial goods, issuing in a reconciliation and a higher good; and Eduard von Hartmann seeing in it only too easily an exemplification of his own pessimistic view of the universe in general. Even such writers, however, are compelled, when they describe the actual stuff of tragic works of art, i.e. both the mental processes of the characters themselves and the reactions induced in us as spectators, to use terms taken from psychology. They have to speak both of emotion in general, with qualities such as intensity, vividness, or depth, and of specific emotions or tendencies such as pity, fear, sympathy, indignation, pathos, sublimity, the sordid, the horrible or repulsive, and so on. Whatever view may be taken of the general nature and scope of aesthetics, it seems obvious that some part of it at any rate must be taken up with an analysis and description of the mental processes induced in the subject by a certain class of objects. Such a description should surely be based on a classification which aims at scientific accuracy and does not take its terms uncritically from popular usage. This is the business of psychology.

This might be admitted by some who would, however, go on to assert that, from such a purely descriptive and psychological starting-point, no conclusions as to value can be drawn. They would say that after we have described certain phenomena of the mental life with as much accuracy as possible we are still as we were with regard to

value, inasmuch as no number of statements about what *is* can ever tell us what *ought to be*. The answer to such an objection seems to me almost too obvious. The facts to be collected and described will themselves consist in part of valuations; and these valuations are not without uniformity. We need not say that it is "normal" to human nature to find certain experiences good or bad. For the word "normal" seems to import a bias and imply that valuations are right and wrong in some absolute sense, as conforming to a standard. For the present purpose it is not necessary to assert this. It is only necessary to assert that generalizations can be made about what human beings find valuable or the reverse. It is open to anyone to say that he disagrees with the majority, and in that case from the point of view taken here no one can prove that he is mistaken. I shall not therefore attempt to pass beyond the psychological level and on this level propose to see what generalizations can be made.

It will have been observed that the examples of mental processes given above were all taken from the sphere of feeling and emotion. This was done intentionally. There are theories of aesthetics which may be called intellectualist. It would not be universally agreed that aesthetic experience is a matter of feeling and emotion. At the same time such a view is very widely held. For example, those theories which may be called expressionist, would in general say that art is the expression of emotion. There is therefore some preliminary justification for the procedure which I propose to adopt, viz. to start with an analysis and description of certain facts of the affective life which seem to me relevant, but without special reference in the first place to the question of aesthetics, and then passing to aesthetics to see if an acceptable account can be given of the nature of the tragic experience in terms of the generalizations already arrived at. It has to be admitted that no facts of the mental life are so fluctuating and so difficult to define as those of feeling. Clear-cut distinctions are not easy to find. It is idle therefore to expect general agreement. I can only offer certain generalizations for what they are worth.

The simplest phenomena of feeling would be generally held to be pleasure and unpleasure. The latter is admittedly not always a suitable term. It may, for example, seem a somewhat tenuous expression for the extremer agonies of suffering. But inasmuch as pain is usually used in psychology to mean not a feeling but a certain class of bodily sensation, it is necessary to find some other word for the opposite of pleasure. For the purpose of this discussion we can exclude all consideration of pleasure and unpleasure arising in direct dependence on bodily processes. Whatever may be the nature of the feelings involved in the tragic experience, they are certainly not of bodily origin. Excluding feelings of this class, we may take as our starting-point the view according to which pleasure is the feeling occurring

when any conation, i.e. any impulse or tendency in which the mind tends or strives in a certain direction, is proceeding successfully or has attained a successful end, and unpleasure similarly the feeling occurring when a conation is impeded or has failed. It will accord with this theory to hold that these feelings are essentially subjective, i.e. qualifications, or affections, of a central self. This statement is no doubt somewhat summary; but it is necessarily made here in the form of an assumption and a starting-point. Now it seems obvious to introspection that in the experience of success there is necessarily a certain decrease of tension, a relaxation, which tends to carry with it a lowering of the intensity and vividness of the mental life. No doubt there may be present a high degree of vividness, while a conational train is in progress and is felt to be successfully getting towards its end. But such vividness seems to be proportionate to the strength of the opposition which is still being overcome, and to be less, according as the task goes more easily and smoothly. A life which always went with complete and easy success, in which struggle and difficulty were entirely absent, would be, apart from any ulterior effects on the moral character, also a very dull life. Let me quote some vigorous lines of Dryden:

> Some lazy ages lost in sleep and ease
> No action leave to busy chronicles;
> Such whose supine felicity but makes
> In story chasms, in epoches mistakes,
> O'er whom Time gently shakes his wings of down,
> Till with his silent sickle they are mown.[1]

"Supine felicity" is an admirable expression of what I mean. The converse is the case with experience involving unpleasure. There is no unpleasure unless there is some reaction *against* loss or damage. If defeat were entirely accepted, unpleasure would cease. The fact that it exists shows that there is energy left in the self to resist and affirm itself. Indeed the intensity of the unpleasure is roughly proportionate to the energy of the resistance. Bradley has put the point well—"Mere loss, mere contraction of psychical existence never pains us by itself. It does so only when some element feels itself thwarted and diminished, and for that we must have positive reaction and tension. If from the world which is dear to me you could isolate one fraction and extirpate it wholly, with all its memories and connexions, I should never feel the loss of it."[2] It seems true to say that unpleasure has in itself a quality of vividness and intensity that is lacking in pleasure. This quality is one which can be felt as possessing a certain "goodness" or value. Do we not sometimes

[1] Dryden, *Astraea Redux*.

[2] F. H. Bradley, "Pleasure, Pain, Desire and Volition," in *Mind*, Jan. 1888, p. 5.

hear people say after a time of difficulty, danger, and suffering: "At least we have *lived*; our lives have not been flat and uninteresting"? With some poets the idea may almost be called a commonplace:

> Then welcome each rebuff
> That turns earth's smoothness rough, . . .
> Be our joy three parts pain.[1]

and so on. When Shakespeare wrote: "There is some soul of goodness in things evil" he had something of the same idea in his mind; for he continues: "For our bad neighbour makes us early stirrers." The antithesis which I have thus indicated is indeed present throughout the whole mental life, even in the cognitive sphere, where it is sometimes thought feeling hardly exists. Before a continued sameness of stimulation, the mind tends to slide down into a dull apathetic state, in which consciousness may be diminished almost to the vanishing point. A change of stimulation and a new object, whatever it may be, means a shock or jar, to which the mind has to adjust itself. This shock initially and in itself, apart from any further activity of comprehension, must be considered to be of the nature of the unpleasant, slight and hardly noticeable though the feeling may generally be. A more definite affective colouring is to be noticed in the case of surprise, i.e. when something occurs other than the expected. In the smooth succession of the customary and familiar there is a latent feeling of comfort and at-homeness which is a form of pleasure. But the mind tends to become dull and apathetic and the level of consciousness to be lowered. The unexpected event which jolts us out of the customary track comes actually as a shock with a tinge of negative value. But through it the conscious level is heightened. Often, of course, without any cue given by an external event we rebel against the sameness of circumstances with that feeling which is called boredom. The boredom in fact *is* the rebellion. It may mean a high degree of unpleasure. But it is a feeling of which only a highly developed mind is capable. Most animals do not seem to be bored with sameness of environment. The same may be true of primitive human minds. The spirit which cries out, "How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable," may be suffering, but in that very fact has reached a higher level of consciousness. Thus throughout the mental life there runs a sort of alternating rhythm, involving a contradiction never to be wholly reconciled. We find success and pleasure bringing relaxation and lowering of the mental level, failure and unpleasure involving resistance and struggle with increase of energy and intensity; sameness and familiarity bringing comfort and repose, novelty causing the shock of surprise with greater vividness of the conscious life. It is on the basis

[1] Browning, *Rabbi ben Ezra.*

of facts such as these that it has been asserted that pleasure and unpleasure are not the only simple and elementary feelings, but that the affective life also moves in another dimension, that between excitement on the one hand and relaxation (or depression) on the other. We need not decide here whether this formal classification and division of feelings is possible. We can at least say this, I think, that the mental life constantly varies in degree of excitement or tension, and that at the excitement end of the scale there is a value lacking at the relaxation end, a value which we usually express by contrasting the vividness and energy of life with dullness and flatness. It further appears that this element of value is more likely to be combined with unpleasure than with pleasure experiences.

So far we have been dealing with the quality and variety of feelings in their simple and momentary form. We have found a certain "soul of goodness" even in these experiences which at first sight seem to be "bad." In the actual life of adult human beings as we know it there are other elements, however, which contribute further as a rule to overpower the element of goodness in these cases and make the whole experience one of negative value. In the first place, there is likely to be an element of fear. The mental life, we must hold, is essentially prospective; of its own nature it must look forward and strive forward to something in the future. If its effort in the particular direction to which it has been set is frustrated, the struggle may still go on, but with the feeling that it is failing and foredoomed to failure. There is still a reaction, but it is felt as impotent to avert the continuance of the evil. This is the essence of fear, the prevision of badness to come. By degrees there may come an abandonment of the effort and a state of resignation. But this takes time and is seldom achieved completely. While the effort still vainly continues, fear is perhaps the most important element making for the disvalue of the total state. In the second place, in the case of a human being who has reached the necessary stage of development, it is probable that the mental life will have organized itself in certain directions and for certain interests. The fact of failure will mean that it has received a shock entailing a change of direction and interest. Thrown back on itself it may be unable to adjust itself to the altered circumstances and suffer a measure of disorganization. The mind deprived of a main source of effort will feel as though it worked fruitlessly and at random, without self-direction and self-mastery. There is one form of interest in human life which is so important and pervasive that it deserves special mention. Where there is the possibility of a fixed character and an idea of one's own selfhood, it is likely that there will be the element of humiliation, the blow to self-respect. There are, of course, many losses and griefs which are the result of circumstances beyond the agent's control and in which there is no blow to pride.

But wherever a main conation is definitely frustrated, it is seldom that the agent will not have some sort of weakness with which to reproach himself. In such cases the bitterness of humiliation will be felt, and there are few human miseries equal to this.

But however naturally all this may seem to occur, there is another possibility. The resistance latent in all unpleasure experiences may acquire such strength and momentum that it may lead to a self-affirmation which seems to overpower the elements of negative value. More precisely the form which this process can take may be described as follows. The fact of failure and loss may be faced calmly and resolutely. Even if no fresh ends or interests can present themselves as a distraction, the self may still have a pride in the mere fact of being able to look the disaster squarely in the face without disorganization and loss of self-mastery. There need be no regrets over the past; for the self may affirm that its former interests were worth while and it was right to pursue them, though it may have failed. And in such a state of mind the future will naturally be faced without fear. The sense of impotence to avert the continuance of evil will be replaced by one of strength and self-confidence. The worst of all fears is the fear of death, the sense that the conscious self is moving towards extinction and that there is no power to prevent it. A peculiar pride and exaltation may be felt when the mind feels that it has risen superior to the fear of death. Indeed, the sense of conscious life may be heightened by the mere contrast with the idea of its extinction. Browning shows us his villain Guido expressing this self-enhancement as he faces execution:

> You never know what life means till you die;
> Even throughout life, 'tis death that makes life live,
> Gives it whatever the significance;
> For see, on your own ground and argument,
> Suppose life had no death to fear, how find
> A possibility of nobleness
> In man prevented daring any more?[1]

And we may suppose the Greek philosopher meant the same thing, when he said that he was spending his last and happiest day. In being able to maintain this attitude the mind feels that it has attained its greatest possible triumph.

There is, however, another factor in the value of such an experience, which has yet to be described more fully. The life of the ordinary human being in a modern community is as a rule organized round and governed by certain main interests, such as self-respect, sex and family love, pride in social status, patriotism, and so on. These sentiments or dispositions may be strong, but may remain latent. If they are not seriously challenged, life may pursue its even tenor without

[1] Browning, *The Ring and the Book*—Guido's last speech, ll. 2375, etc.

great catastrophes or great successes. In the affective side of such a life we find a tendency towards a quality to be described as triviality, superficiality, or flatness. But suppose one of these main interests of life is threatened and a fight has to be made in order to maintain it, then it is possible that its full value and meaning will for the first time be brought out and felt by the mind. If furthermore the struggle fails, and disappointment of one's aims or loss of what was prized has to be admitted, then, if the mind is still able to hold out and maintain itself in the ways just described, the whole experience seems thereby to acquire a quality to be described as seriousness and death. The self, feeling, in the ordinary phrase, that it is "up against it," may call up all its powers, and unsuspected depths of its being may be revealed. It has often been said that only in suffering is a man's full nature realized by himself. Therewith goes necessarily a certain mental stability and balance. The quality in question differs from mere intensity or violence. Feelings may be very intense, but also temporary, superficial, and accompanied by some degree of agitation. It is no doubt possible for many different kinds of emotion or feeling to vary in this quality of depth. There may be a violent and momentary explosion of anger, or there may be a deep-seated indignation, involving the whole nature, and governing conduct for long periods. But in its full form, as it seems to me, this attribute of depth only belongs to those experiences just described; i.e. when the self, challenged and frustrated in one of the main interests of its life, falls back on its own resources and still affirms itself and maintains its balance as against all tendencies to weakness and disintegration. In such cases feeling will have the quality both of depth and of intensity. On the other hand, the quality in question may well disappear in mere success and happiness. The contrast has often been felt and stated both by the poet and by the ordinary man. It is well expressed in a prologue of the Elizabethan dramatist John Marston:

> If any spirit breathe within this round
> Uncapable of weighty passion
> As being from his birth hugged in the arms
> And nuzzled 'twixt the breasts of happiness.[1]

In June 1940 *The Times* published and afterwards reprinted an anonymous letter from a young airman, from which extracts may be quoted:

> For all that may be said against it I still maintain that this war is a very good thing; every individual is having the chance to give and dare all for his principle like the martyrs of old. . . .
>
> We are sent to this world to acquire a personality and a character to take with us that can never be taken from us. Those who just eat and sleep, prosper and procreate, are no better than animals if all their lives they are at peace.

[1] Marston, *Prologue to Antonio's Revenge*.

A parallel may be cited which perhaps may make the meaning clearer, namely that to be found in the attraction of adventure. Dangerous adventure may be sought in order to escape from the triviality and flatness of ordinary life and because in danger, when a man feels that he is "up against it," all the latent powers and depths of his mind may be called up, while at the same time the sense of life may be enhanced through the mere fact of the possibility of its extinction. Many quotations could be given which express this feeling. There is the famous couplet:

> One crowded hour of glorious life
> Is worth an age without a name.

And Schiller states it in epigrammatic form in the concluding lines of his soldiers' song:

> Und setzet Ihr nicht das Leben ein,
> Nie eird Euch das Leben gewonnen sein.[1]

Only by putting your life to the hazard can you win the full sense of life. Every one will feel instinctively that there is given here a quality of the affective or emotional life, not adequately described by the terms pleasure and unpleasure, or even happiness and unhappiness.

In describing these experiences as they may occur in ordinary life there has been already implied a preliminary account of the value pertaining to that form of art known as tragedy. Art is in essence the expression or embodiment, in a permanent form, of some emotion which seems to him who has felt it to deserve perpetuation. Whether or how far the emotion can be said to be fully felt until it finds this expression is a matter which does not concern us here. Doubtless there are many degrees in the explicitness to which the emotion has attained before it finds full embodiment in a work of art. We can call art the expression of emotion without further discussing the point. Amongst other emotions there can be expressed in art that experience of suffering with the values to be drawn from it, which we have already described. It is obvious that such expression can properly take place only in words. We sometimes think, no doubt, of an Elegy, a Requiem, or a Funeral March as giving us in pure sound a representation of sorrow which is overcome and redeemed. Or again in pictorial art we may seem to find in a Descent from the Cross, or in a Self-Portrait by Rembrandt, a great depth of tragic experience. But the effect of all such forms of expression must be pronounced obscure and doubtful as compared with that which can be conveyed through the medium of words; and so in speaking of tragedy we naturally think principally of literature. In literature the expression of an emotion may be simple and direct. A poem often purports to convey

[1] Schiller, *Wallenstein's Lager*, concluding lines.

to us directly the feelings of the poet, or at least of some personage whom we may suppose to be his mouthpiece, as Browning, for instance, is doubtless giving us under the name of Rabbi ben Ezra something which he had felt himself. Such direct conveyance of feeling suffers, however, under the disadvantage that, divorced from the concrete example, it may tend to become abstract and descriptive. When the doings and sufferings of human beings are portrayed before us in a concrete (though imaginary) form, the emotions arising out of the events seem to come to us with their full weight and meaning. It is therefore in narrative or drama that the tragic experience can be most effectively expressed. Most people, when they hear of tragedy, tend to think of drama. But one cannot refuse the title also to works in the narrative form, such as epic, novel, or story.

The simplest form in which the value of tragedy appears is when the characters themselves, in the imaginary world of the drama or story, by their acts and words show themselves as able to stand up against calamity and suffering and thereby as attaining a depth of experience which would not otherwise have been possible. We, as spectators, can then enter sympathetically into their experiences and share them. The hero can be shown as standing up against defeat, refusing all compromise with wrong, still declaring for all or nothing. We may think of Aeschylus' Prometheus, Milton's Samson, Ibsen's Brand. In various other ways the mind may be shown as rising superior to calamity. Lear, after his defeat, expecting the rest of his time in prison, looks forward to a life of contemplation in which he will be able to rise above earthly affairs and look at them from outside with a serene and divine detachment:

> And take upon us the mystery of things
> As if we were God's spies; and we'll wear out
> In a walled prison packs and sets of great ones
> That ebb and flow with the moon.

Othello at the end looks clearly and calmly at his faults and deliberately seeks death in expiation. Nowhere in literature is the fear of death shown as more grandly transcended than in the last scenes of Cleopatra. Rejecting the humiliation of being led a captive in Caesar's triumph, she seeks death with a supreme exaltation of spirit:

> And then what's brave, what's noble
> Let's do it after the high Roman fashion
> And make death proud to take us.
>
> And it is great
> To do the thing that ends all other deeds;
> Which shackles accidents and bolts up change.

> Give me my robe, put on my crown, I have
> Immortal longings in me . . .
> I am fire and air, my other elements
> I give to baser life.

Perhaps worthy to be set beside this is the last scene of Cassandra, who pronounces her own dirge as she goes calmly to the fate which she herself knows is coming, but which others will not believe.

It would, however, be difficult to find in all tragedies exalted sentiments such as these directly expressed by the characters themselves. Moreover, the emotions, of which we have given examples, though they may grow naturally out of the action of the drama, yet may also appear to us as isolated elements in the total action. In a great tragedy it is the story and its characters taken as a whole which seem to speak to us and produce the tragic effect. What this seems to mean is that there are not only the sympathetic feelings which we share with the characters in the play, but also feelings with which, as the result of our own psychical nature, we react to the total objective situation, and which may therefore be called "reactive" feelings. What then is the nature of these so-called reactive feelings? It would probably be alleged by some writers that there are different types of tragedy and that to these types our reactions will be different. Let us look first at the type of Shakespearean tragedy as it is described for us by A. C. Bradley.[1] What Shakespeare shows us in most of his tragedies is some central character or "hero" with strength, nobility, and greatness of character above the ordinary, but inevitably, as it seems, bound up with this greatness, some defect or onesidedness which in his contacts with the outside world brings him to disaster. In Hamlet we have a man who possesses intellectual genius shown in the capacity to think profoundly on life, but who as the reverse side of this character reflects too long before he acts, and so fails when he is set an exacting test in practical life. In *Othello* it seems only too natural that two characters so simple, straightforward and essentially noble as Othello and Desdemona should be wanting in subtlety and circumspection and so fall victims to the plot of a cunning villain. Many modern tragedies may be considered to be of the same type. Ivan Karamazov may be called a modern Hamlet, with the difference that his intellectual uncertainties involve him in real madness. Goethe's *Faust* sets out in more philosophical form the fundamental discord in human nature which seems to involve it in the necessity of failure, i.e. the fact that in order to live men must believe in the possibility of attaining ends and strive towards them, but that at the same time complete attainment would mean the end of effort and of life. To come to a modern novel, we find in *Jude the Obscure* the story of how a peasant

[1] A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, pp. 19–23.

boy's aspirations to learning and self-advancement are frustrated, partly through the obstacle of social barriers, and partly because he is plucked back by the mighty hand of sex; so that in the end it would seem better for him not to have aspired at all. All tragedy, it is true, does not conform to the full Shakespearean type. Many tragedies which move us set out a tale of mere human weakness and suffering, in which there is no trace of greatness in the central character. But always, I think, if there is to be a truly tragic effect, there must be some hint of inevitability and universality, some suggestion that the facts are typical of human nature and the world. For an example we may think of Madame Bovary, a woman who in discontent with the dullness of her life indulges in romantic dreams of a type common to many of us, and who is then led on to try and act them out and comes to terrible disaster. As the result of cases such as these we seem to be driven to the conclusion that in the world there is no good not liable to fail, and that that which is best and finest in it especially carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction. If this does not mean a wholly evil world, yet it means a frustrated world, one necessarily infected with evil, in which no ultimately secure good is possible.

What then is our reaction to a situation of this kind? Let us think first of the characters and their fortunes presented to us as individual existences. Sometimes we have emotions depicted for us into which we can enter with an approximation to full sympathetic sharing, to take an instance already given, Cleopatra's triumphant resistance to submission. But obviously it would be impossible to share fully in all the feelings of all the characters in a play all the time. There must be something less than this. We can call it a "truncated" sympathy or rather an "understanding." For instance, we can understand Othello's jealousy because we have incipient tendencies to the same sort of emotion in ourselves and so are aware of our capacity for it, without directly feeling it as our own at the moment. Thus while we can understand the emotions of the characters as springing from the common human nature which we share with them, yet the story as a whole remains something external to us, something contemplated as a spectacle. It is, moreover, contemplated as taking place in a world of the imagination, not in the real world with which we are in physical contact. It has the colouring of the imaginary and does not strike us with the hard directness of the real event. But if the story is a sign or symbol of a destiny applying to all human life, then a different factor has come in, and it must in that respect be more than just a spectacle to us. The import of the story has become something in which we, as part of the world we live in, have a share. A struggling and suffering humanity, liable to and infected with evil, is real to us, not part of an imaginative con-

struction, and we ourselves appear as sharing its burdens. Against this common suffering, which is partly appropriated to ourselves, it is then possible for us to stand up with the same kind of constancy, courage, and steadiness as that with which we can face our individual sufferings. A similar exaltation and a similar deepening of selfhood may come. But in this form the experience is bound to have a different colouring from that of the individual calamity. The sharpness, acuteness, and narrow urgency of the latter will tend to disappear. In that which is universally shared there will be a certain calmness and breadth of outlook. Of course no sense of that humiliation, which is so important a factor in the bitterness of a personal failure, will be felt. There is rather some comfort and redemption in the mere fact of sharing. It is here that we may find the essence of the value to be obtained from the tragic experience. The author of a great tragedy will have enabled us to draw out the soul of goodness in things evil, and to transcend the negative value of suffering in the completest possible way. For this will have been achieved not by an escape, but by developing something latent from the first in the nature of all unpleasure.

It is not necessary for the poet to express this universal import of his story in an explicit verbal form. In Greek drama the poet spoke directly to his audience through the mouth of the chorus. But to moralize on the story through such a device does not seem necessary. Without it the poet has no doubt to assume a certain standard of thought and reflection on the part of his audience. It is not impossible to miss the full force of what is presented. But given the necessary standard in the audience it is possible for the poet to present his story in so clear a form, with the antitheses and conflicts so powerfully drawn, that it is not difficult to see the universal meaning, even though no character expresses it directly. To take a fairly simple instance, no one reading *Julius Caesar* can fail to see how it is the generous character of Brutus, leading him to spare Antony's life, which later brings about his own downfall; and the reader will be able to draw his own moral.

The tragic experience in its full form and with its full value can, I think, only be obtained from the creations of the imagination. No doubt something resembling it may occur, as we contemplate the rise and fall of empires or civilizations, seeming to see, for example, how successful conquest necessarily often carries with it the seeds of demoralization and decay. Single events too, such as the Athenian expedition to Sicily described by Thucydides, are sometimes said to contain all the essentials of tragedy. There is, however, great difficulty in getting from history the same effect as from a work of art. History, as long as it has any regard for truth, can hardly bring out the universal import of events, as can the creations of imagination. Facts are usually recalcitrant to the moral which we might

like to draw. There are nearly always qualifications and exceptions. If history does attempt anything of the sort, we become suspicious, and our allegiance tends to become divided between the intellectual and the aesthetic values. Of course, there are historical tragedies which rank as great works of art. But we come to them with the presupposition that the facts have been idealized and do not belong to the world of literal fact. We are certain that Antony and Cleopatra, Brutus, Richard II, Joan of Arc, or Wallenstein never really spoke, or indeed acted, just like that. The poet has, we feel, distilled something universal out of their histories, which may have been implied, but never happened just in that form.

It may help to elucidate my meaning if I cite one or two works, portraying human sufferings, but in which the sense of universality, the sense of the particular as a sign of something worldwide, is lacking, and in which therefore, as it seems to me, there is no true tragic value. Zola's *La Bête Humaine* is a story of men and women, most of whom may be described as "killers," under the influence of various motives. The central character, Jacques Lantier, is a man whose desire for the woman he loves is perverted into a fierce lust to shed her blood and kill her, in order to feel a sort of secure possession of her for ever. It is impossible to appropriate this sort of thing to ourselves, or to regard it as a sign of something common to human nature. Rather we shrink from it with repulsion. I would also instance as a kind of catastrophe which does not seem to attain the full status of tragedy, the cases of child-suicide, such as that which is an episode in *Jude the Obscure*, and that in a play, much discussed for a time in London, *Mädchen in Uniform*. The state of mind in which a child commits suicide can only be conceived as one of frantic blind terror and loneliness. In itself it cannot be imagined to have any ennobling or redeeming element. We cannot, moreover, think of such a thing as characteristic of life in general or as a sign of any deep-seated wrongness in the world. Rather it strikes us as unnatural, perverted, and monstrous. It is something sordid and depressing, but which remains in essence external to us.

It might be alleged that in all this we have been referring to one type of tragedy, the Shakespearean, and have done less than justice to that other type, usually identified with Greek tragedy. What we find in the most typical form of Greek tragedy is some mysterious curse or doom, of divine origin, acting on a race or a family, and bringing it to disaster and suffering. We cannot say that there is always at the end a reconciliation and appeasement inducing in us an attitude of acceptance towards the divine power; but there is in general a more marked tendency towards such a reconciliation than is usual in modern tragedy. While we may not fully understand the justice of the workings of the divine power, at least we

submit to them as beyond our comprehension and in a sense identify ourselves with them. It seems to me that if we are to give the name of tragedy to works of which this is the dominant spirit, or at least the concluding note, then we cannot include them in one definition with tragedies of the type already described. The essential fact in that type is that, feeling ourselves to be partakers with a frustrated and suffering world, we yet endure, and through the endurance attain to a deeper feeling of selfhood. It is true that in so doing we tend, by reason of a deep-seated impulse in the human mind, to personify the whole of things, or at least to endow it with something resembling a purpose. We tend to speak of the inevitability of suffering, as though there were some force or fate in the world, which willed to bring it about. We need not discuss here whether there is any ultimate justification for this tendency, or whether it is to be considered as merely a relic of a primitive animism. All I would desire to point out is that, in tragedy, if there is any truth in our account of its essence, there would be no acceptance of such a mysterious world force, no appropriation of its working to ourselves, or identification of ourselves with it. Rather we should have to regard it as something external and hostile to ourselves, against which it is in our power and in that of humanity to stand up and rebel, and through that rebellion to attain to a deeper and stronger selfhood. It would be with humanity that we should in that case identify ourselves, not with a power which works on it and condemns it to discord and failure. I would not deny that in submission to and self-identification with a world force there may exist an experience of very high value. It is in effect the sense of the sublime, which consists in a preliminary abasement and fear before an apparently threatening force and then the transcendence of such fear and abasement by an identification of the individual will with that force. Such is the essence of much of religion. It is the spirit which caused Eliphaz the Temanite to hear a voice saying: "Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his Maker?"[1] But in as far as any such feeling exists, it must be regarded as a diminution of the tragic spirit, as it has been described by us. In fact, so far from tragedy being a form of the sublime, as has sometimes been stated, the two would in essence be contradictories.

It remains to consider a possible objection which might be based on a point of somewhat general psychological application. There has been an old controversy turning round what has been called the Paradox of Hedonism. The opponents of Hedonism argued that to make pleasure the direct object of pursuit would be self-defeating; we cannot enjoy pleasure unless we first have objective ends, the successful attainment of which will bring the pleasure; a mere desire

[1] Job iv. 17.

for pleasure would be empty of content. If it is difficult to make pleasure by itself a direct object, still less would it be possible with regard to the values going with unpleasure. It would mean that we should be compelled simultaneously to desire and not to desire success in our pursuits. This, it would be said, is an impossible mental contortion. I would answer that this objection does not in essence affect the preceding argument. The fact that a feeling cannot be made the direct object of pursuit does not logically prove that value does not reside in that feeling. It might possibly be a condition of the enjoyment of any value that it should *not* be directly aimed at. This would certainly make the mental life of man complex and difficult. But complexity and difficulty may have to be admitted as unavoidable factors in human life. As a matter of fact something like this would seem to be really true. If we can guess at the state of mind of a poet writing a tragedy, we may assume that his primary attention is directed to the objective situation. He may wish to show the spectacle or the example of a heroic soul defying calamity or death. Or his mind may be occupied with the idea of a world which by its inherent nature seems destined to discord and suffering. Gradually out of this there may emerge an emotional experience, the nature of which may be somewhat obscure, even to himself, but which may seem at the same time well worthy of communication to others. The spectator who sees the result of his work will also bestow his attention primarily on the objective situation as composed of the characters and their relations. But for him, too, while he contemplates the object there may come a subjective experience not directly envisaged beforehand, i.e. a valuable feeling of the intensified and deepened life of the self. As Aristotle said of pleasure, it would come as a superadded end, perfecting the total activity.[1] Wundt, indeed, elevated something resembling this into a general principle, applicable throughout psychology, under the title of the "Heterogony of Ends."[2]

[1] Aristotle, *Ethics*, X, 4, 8.

[2] Wundt, *Physiologische Psychologie*, 6th ed., III, pp. 764–6.

# RICHARD PRICE: A NEGLECTED EIGHTEENTH CENTURY MORALIST

WINSTON H. F. BARNES, M.A.

OVER ten years ago Professor A. E. Taylor pointed out that one of the most unfortunate effects of that philosophical conquest of England by Germany in the nineteenth century was the almost complete neglect of the great line of British moralists from Cumberland to Price. Little has been done since then to remedy this defect. There is a widespread study of Bishop Butler by students in our Universities, but as regards the other members of the series, there appear no signs of a renaissance. The selections of Mr. Selby-Bigge are admirable, but they serve, as all selections from the authors of a period must, to focus attention on historical similarities, not to stimulate to an examination of individual philosophies.

Richard Price (1723–1791) has suffered particularly from this tendency. His work on Ethics is contained entirely in one small volume, *A Review of the Principal Questions in Morals*,[1] and he has been loosely grouped as the last member of an "intellectual school" whose "founders" were Cudworth and Cumberland. It was the great misfortune of the eighteenth century to have the history of its speculations written by Leslie Stephen. The author of *An Agnostic's Apology*, with his keen scientific rationalism, was bound to approach the theological century with a lack of sympathy. In his *History of Eighteenth Century Thought* he describes the speculations of Richard Price as "nugatory" and adds: "His theory may sometimes remind us of Kant's Categorical Imperative and he seems to have been blundering round the same truths or errors from which the great German elaborated a moral theory far more ingenious, though involving the same fundamental fallacy." Again, in an article on Samuel Clarke in the *Dictionary of National Biography* he refers to "the so-called 'intellectual school' of which Wollaston and Price were the chief English followers, which deduced the moral law from a logical necessity."

The supposed resemblance between Price and Kant has been grossly exaggerated. That Reason perceives moral distinctions, and that the perception of them is a sufficient motive to action; these are the contentions of Price which bring him nearest to Kant. But in the

[1] First edition, 1757. References to this work are given as *Review*, followed by the page number. The reference is to the first edition unless otherwise stated.

details which fill out this scheme he far more resembles Intuitionists of to-day, particularly Sir David Ross, than he resembles the great Immanuel Kant. There is no attempt in Price's work to make Ethics a kind of logic; no attempt to deduce moral obligation from the law of contradiction (as in Wollaston). Unlike previous members of the Intellectual School, he is little concerned with Metaphysics. He has his own approach to the problems in spite of "influences" discernible in his work. In this paper I propose to consider Price's moral philosophy in its relations to other eighteenth century moralists and in its relevance to present-day ethical discussions.

## I

### *Eighteenth Century Methods of Ethics*

The eighteenth century moralists were preoccupied with the task of showing that morality is in accordance with nature. Such a task might be performed either by means of constructing a metaphysical theory or by outlining a moral psychology. Butler pointed out these two different ways of attacking the problem at the beginning of his *Sermons*[1]; and he himself is the outstanding exponent of the psychological approach. Price announces his intention, in the Introduction to his work, "to trace virtue up to truth, and the natures of things, and these to the Deity."[2] and so might seem to be adopting the metaphysical approach of his "intellectual" predecessors. Yet what is most characteristic in his work is that in its general approach it is neither metaphysical nor psychological, but epistemological. That is to say, he considers the problems from the point of view of the moral judgement, and seeks to determine exactly what it is that is being asserted. It is because he adopts this standpoint that he cannot afford to be indifferent (as Butler could) about the means whereby we perceive moral distinctions. He finds that the objectivity of morality can be safeguarded only if it can be established that in our moral judgements we really do grasp something unique in the world and grasp it by the aid of reason. Whereas Butler could discuss the question whether conscience was "a perception of the heart" or "a sentiment of the understanding" as of no moment, since he was considering only the general conformity of a virtuous life to the constitution of human nature; Price is compelled to make just this question central because he has adopted the epistemological approach to the problem. He has, as a natural result of this pro-

[1] Preface to the *Sermons*: "There are two ways in which the subject of morals may be treated. One begins from inquiring into the abstract relations of things; the other from a matter of fact, namely, what the particular nature of man is, its several parts, their economy and constitution, from whence it proceeds to determine what course of life it is, which is correspondent to this whole nature."

[2] *Review*, p. 7.

cedure, a much wider range of opponents. The earlier moralists of the century directed their attacks against Hobbes and Mandeville. They were primarily concerned with demonstrating the attractiveness of goodness, or showing that badness was logically and metaphysically a contradiction. Price lifts the problem on to a different plane by maintaining that one cannot prove the objectivity of morality merely by showing that it evokes a certain psychological response in human nature; nor can one get moral obligation out of mere logical consistency. And he develops his own view in opposition to these and other views.

What makes this line of approach particularly interesting is the fact that it is paralleled in the present state of ethical discussion. Price fought against Hutcheson and Shaftesbury on the one hand, and the Intellectual moralists on the other (with whom he has so unjustly been grouped) as failing to do justice to the objectivity and uniqueness of moral judgements. To-day, Intuitionists like Sir David Ross and Professor G. E. Moore are engaged in a similar struggle with a much more varied opposition on the psychological front and a certain amount of opposition still in the form of logico-metaphysical theories.[1] Hence a discussion of Price's problem and his attempted solution is by no means irrelevant to present-day discussion in Ethics.

## II

### *The "Naked and Just State" of the Question*

Hutcheson had put forward the doctrine that we apprehend the rightness or wrongness of actions by means of a "moral sense." Price finds that the doctrine as thus stated may have a wider or a narrower significance. The term "moral sense" may mean merely a "moral faculty" by which we immediately approve or disapprove certain actions; or the term "sense" may be used to indicate a faculty in our minds analogous to the five senses, "a power of perception distinct from reason."[2]

Price accepts unquestioningly the truth of the more general assertion that we have "a faculty determining us *immediately* to approve or disapprove of actions."[3] Hence he is enabled to reject out of hand a number of other theories. His reasons for rejecting them, though stated briefly, are interesting and, in the main, just those which are given to-day by Intuitionists. The theories to which he refers are those which base our obligations upon some supposed contract into which we have entered, or upon the law of the land, or upon the will of God, or upon private advantage. He has three arguments against them: (i) All such theories "must either mean

[1] E.g. H. J. Paton's *The Coherence Theory of Goodness.*
[2] *Review*, p. 10.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

that moral good and evil are only other words for *advantageous* and *disadvantageous*, *willed* and *forbidden*, and thus are mere names signifying nothing distinct and positive. Or that they relate to a very different question; that is, not to the question: what is the nature and true account of virtue; but what is the subject matter of it."[1] If the second is meant, no objection need be taken to such theories for they are not then theories about the nature of right and wrong, but about the nature of those things which are judged to be right or wrong. If the first is meant, then it is obviously false, for unless right and wrong stand for something other than advantageous or disadvantageous, willed or not willed, etc., it would be absurd to ask "whether it is *right* to obey a command, or wrong to disobey it; and the propositions, *obeying a command is right*, or *producing happiness is right*, would be most triflingly identical, as expressing no more than that obeying a command is obeying a command, or producing happiness is producing happiness."[2] Such questions are *not* absurd; they are not merely a case of asking 'Does a thing that has the character X have the character X?" They really do ask something. Therefore all such analyses of ethical predicates must be rejected as unsatisfactory. (ii) Again, such theories may be seen to be unsound by reason of the mere fact that there is a question raised at all as to whether moral predicates such as "right" and "wrong" are perceived by the intellect or by some other faculty such as a sense. For no one can doubt that the relations of actions to will and law, to happiness and misery are perceived by the intellect. This argument, very briefly stated by Price,[3] can be made more powerful if we consider that on any one of these views criticized it must follow that whether an action is right or wrong can be settled by a purely factual inquiry. And many would claim, as Dr. Ewing does,[4] that we can see that questions of right and wrong cannot be settled by introspection or statistics. (iii) "All laws, will, and compacts suppose antecedent right to give them force effect and obligation; and therefore, instead of being the constituents and foundations of *right*, they are *themselves* evidently founded upon it."[5]

When such views are ruled out, then, it is clear that moral intuitions are unique. Hutcheson was, so far, right. "The naked and just state of the question," i.e. the issue with Hutcheson, is simply whether virtue "*has* or has *not* a foundation in the *nature* of its object; whether *right* and *wrong* are real qualities of *actions*, or only *of our minds*, and denote what actions *are*, or only *sensations* depend-

[1] *Review*, p. 15.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 15. It is worth noting how explicitly Price makes the essential point made by Professor Moore in his attack on the naturalistic fallacy. *Principia Ethica*, § 13.

[3] *Review*, p. 16.

[4] Cf. A. C. Ewing, *Idealism*, p. 417.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

ing upon the particular frame and structure of our natures."[1] This is the "*only* question about the foundation of morals, that can rationally and properly be made a subject of debate."[1] This is an exaggerated claim; but that the question is the *most important* one in ethics few would be prepared to deny, since it amounts to asking: "Have ethical judgements objective validity?"

In conscious opposition to Hutcheson, Price proceeds to defend his own view that the understanding perceives certain actions to be right or wrong. Hutcheson's philosophy, he considers, is tantamount to the assertion that "there is nothing right or wrong but feeling makes it so," which is only a way of saying that there *is* nothing right or wrong. A "moral sense" is merely a kind of "relish" for virtue; and it is a matter of the arbitrary constitution of a man whether he has this relish or not, and to what extent. The view which Price himself puts forward he expresses as follows: The understanding is the source of our moral ideas and these ideas are simple and incapable of analysis. It is not to be supposed that these ideas are *subjective* because they proceed from the understanding. On the contrary, the understanding is the source of an objective truth which cannot be yielded by the senses. The view is, then, that "right" and "wrong" are *a priori* concepts having objective validity and being incapable of any analysis.

## III

*The Arguments for Rationalistic Intuitionism*

In order to show that rightness and wrongness are predicates properly attaching to actions and as such are grasped by the understanding, Price uses a variety of arguments. (i) First he insists that undoubtedly many of our simple ideas do proceed from the understanding. He develops this contention by means of a criticism of Locke's theory of knowledge and its more empirical development in Hume. It is an interesting discussion but its main significance here is that Price believes a thorough-going sensationalism to be hostile not only to the validity of moral truths but also to that of truths in other spheres such as mathematics and physics. There are ideas, such as those of cause, power, etc., which are not derived through sensation, are simple, and must therefore be furnished by the intellect. "It is on this power of intuition, essential, in some degree or other, to all rational minds, that the possibility and every step of all reasoning are founded."[2] (ii) The main reason according to Price for doubting whether rightness and wrongness are real characters of action is that the apprehension of such characters is always an emotional experience. His answer to this objection is, in brief: It is

[1] Cf. A. C. Ewing, *Idealism*, p. 14.

[2] *Review*, p. 169.

true that some impressions of pleasure and pain attend our perception of the rightness and wrongness of actions, but these are merely the effects of the latter and no more to be confounded with them than a particular truth with the pleasure attending its discovery.[1] All apprehensions of truth have an accompanying emotion; it is merely more marked in the case of apprehensions of moral truths. There is a weakness in this argument. The emotions seem to *condition* moral judgements in some way rather than merely to be effects of them.[2] But the exact relation between the apprehension and the emotional experience has not been made any clearer by modern intuitionists. (iii) A third argument points out that if right and wrong denote simply mental effects produced by the contemplation of certain actions it should be obvious that these terms are inapplicable to anything but a mind, just as much as "pleased" and "pained" are—and this is not the case. This argument might be met by urging that "right" and "wrong" do not signify emotions in me but "being a cause of" emotions in me. Price does not consider this possibility. He was arguing against Hutcheson; and Hutcheson confused two positions: (*a*) that "to judge an action right" is simply to have an emotional reaction upon contemplating it (and so is not a judgement at all); (*b*) that it is to judge that I am having a certain emotional reaction, or that something is capable in appropriate circumstances of causing such an emotional reaction. The argument is further weakened by Price maintaining that just as it is an absurdity to attribute a pleasant state to a material body, so, if we speak accurately, it is an absurdity to attribute a colour to a body, colour being obviously a mode of consciousness, and not a real property of bodies. Such a ready belief in the subjectivity of the secondary qualities (in the face of common sense) bodes ill for the argument. (iv) A fourth argument maintains that if rightness and wrongness are mere effects in us, then there is nothing which *really* is right, which we *really ought to do*; and if this is so, we might be expected to act simply upon our blind propensions. We do not: and so we may conclude that the premiss is false. Here again it is impossible to agree that the conclusion follows. If rightness and wrongness are merely effects in consciousness, it certainly follows that they are not characters of actions. But it does not follow that there is nothing *really* right or *really* wrong, since an effect in consciousness

[1] *Review*, p. 65.

[2] Dr. Martineau has put this objection as follows: " . . . the feeling of obligation, the enthusiasm of approval, are absolutely *integral* to the moral judgement, and not *consecutive* upon it; they constitute its very form, so that we cannot even conceive of its holding any contents without them; take them away, and the intellectual matter of the judgement will go with them."—*Types of Ethical Theory*, 3, II, p. 480.

is as real as a character of an action. Nor does it follow that, if this were so, we should act from blind propensions, if by this is meant (as it is) that we should act from feelings other than those which we designate by the terms "right" and "wrong." These feelings also would co-operate in determining our actions. What the theory could not easily explain would be the unique position occupied by these feelings in the economy of our nature. Bishop Butler attempted to meet this objection by urging that some principles of action are more authoritative than others, notably conscience. The defect in Butler's account is that unless conscience is the apprehension of rightness or wrongness as characters belonging to actions, it is difficult to see whence it derives its authority.

These four arguments all seem to be defective in one way or another. It appears that the most that can be expected of an intuitionist in ethics (the most, at any rate, that he can offer) in the way of proof is (*a*) to show the inadequacy of other theories; (*b*) to present for consideration examples which are calculated to make clear that there really is this indefinable characteristic "rightness"; (*c*) to show that certain facts which seem at first sight very damaging to an intuitionist theory (variability of moral codes, the hesitancy of moral judgements in certain cases) can be accounted for in a way consistent with the theory. As far as (*a*) is concerned Price seems to have successfully refuted theories which attempt to *define* rightness in terms of other notions such as God, contract, law, etc. His arguments against Utilitarianism also (which will be considered later), are, I think, convincing. As regards positive proof for the theory, the arguments we have just considered are inadequate and the method of approach is wrong. The proper thing to do is so to present instances that the reader is enabled to apprehend the unique characteristic rightness. It is not possible to point it out to him; all that can be done is to give him as many opportunities as possible to discern it. In doing this Richard Price seems to me as successful as it is possible to be. He points out, first of all, certain terminological facts.

Although right and wrong are terms which admit of no definition, they have synonyms which help to throw light on their meaning. There is a sense of "reasonable" in which it means "right." Of more concern for his purpose is that there is a sense of "fit" and "unfit" in which they are equivalent in meaning to right and wrong. But, if we are to be helped by the use of these words to appreciate the qualities of rightness and wrongness in actions, two *caveats* are necessary. In the first place, we must not suppose ourselves to be *defining* "rightness" as "fitness." This was the mistake of the intellectual moralists who spoke of "acting suitably to the nature of things"; treating things as they are; conformity to truth; agreement

and disagreement, congruity and incongruence between actions and relations. The deficiency of all such statements considered as definitions of rightness is stated with great clarity by Price: "These expressions are of no use, and have little meaning if considered as intended to *define* virtue; for they evidently *presuppose* it. Treating a thing as being what *it is*, is treating it as *'tis right such* a thing should be treated. Conforming ourselves to truth, means the same as conforming ourselves to the true state and relations we are in; which is the same with doing what such a state and relations *require*, or what is *right* in them."[1] (It is here that Price distinguishes himself quite clearly from the more metaphysical speculations on morals of Wollaston and Clark.) Secondly, we must not confuse the sense of "fitness" in which it means "rightness" with the sense in which we speak of something as fit to produce certain effects; *though it is worth remarking that in either sense fitness is indefinable.*[2]

The sort of instances which Price presents as calculated to direct our attention to the unique qualities rightness and wrongness are as follows: Consider the case of an innocent being suffering eternal and absolute misery. It must be admitted that the mind perceives an incongruity between the two states—innocence and absolute misery. No one can help admitting that such a state of affairs is wrong. Or the case of a man who after having his hopes raised to the uttermost is plunged into disappointment and misery. Or the case of a man who responds to acts of benevolence by the blackest ingratitude. Prince's contention is that if we consider *extreme cases* like this we can discern the moral quality of rightness (or wrongness) which appertains to actions and situations, even though in less extreme cases we may have momentary doubt.

When we have convinced ourselves by examples that we are aware of the properties of "rightness" and "wrongness" we may consider the various classes of actions to which they belong.

## IV

### *The Diversity of Moral Principles*

In the seventh chapter "Of the Subject-Matter of Virtue," Price first demonstrates the insufficiency of Utilitarianism, quoting and amplifying Butler's declaration (in his *Dissertation on Virtue*) that the whole of virtue is not to be found in benevolence. "It cannot surely be true, for instance, that promises and engagements are not in any case binding upon any one, any further than he thinks the observance of them will be productive of good to particular persons or to society."[3] And again, "Would it be indifferent whether a person, supposed to be just returned from some unknown country

[1] *Review*, p. 216. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 180. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 229.

or new world, gave a true or a false account of what he had seen?"[1] And there follows a great number of other instances calculated to extort from the reader the admission that there are duties that are so for other reasons than their consequences upon society. The ideas of promise-keeping, truth-telling, gratitude, etc., remain as clear and compelling, even when we remove all thought of the effects on society. Moreover, as Price points out, *we do not in fact* take account of distant consequences; we approve and disapprove immediately.

If public good, i.e. the happiness of society, were the sole measure of duties and rights, "it would be absurd to say *innocent* beings have a right to exemption from misery, or that they may not be made in any degree completely and entirely miserable, if but the smallest degree of *prepollent* good can arise from it."[2] Whereas, in fact, so far from being absurd it commands universal assent.

The fault of all such theorizing is the attempt to show that all duties are resoluble into *one* type of action. "But why must there be in the human mind approbation only of one sort of actions . . .? Why may we not as well have an immediate relish also for truth, for candour, sincerity, piety, gratitude, and many other modes and principles of conduct?"[3] Such, in fact, maintains Price, is the case.

He proceeds to sum up the content of our duty under six principles of virtue:

(i) *Duty to God.* The worship and gratitude we owe to God we owe to Him not because it will make Him happy, but because as our creator it is fitting He should be the object of such behaviour. In a similar manner we have duties to men on earth simply in virtue of their superior rank and station.

(ii) *Duty respecting one's self.* It would be contrary to reason to deny that I have a duty to promote my own good. Indeed, other duties apart, I ought to prefer my own good to another's. (This is a rather surprising contention, but what Price has in mind is that we undoubtedly think it right to provide for ourselves out of worldly goods we possess rather than set to work to provide for others in similar circumstances to ourselves.) A steady regard to one's own interest in the face of an importunate appetite, is genuinely meritorious.

(iii) *Duty of beneficence.* It is certainly our duty to promote the happiness of others, though our *whole* duty is not thereby comprehended.

(iv) *Duty of gratitude.* "With respect to this part of virtue, it is proper to observe, that it is but one out of a great variety of instances, wherein particular facts and circumstances constitute a fitness of a different behaviour to different persons, independently of its consequences. The different moral qualifications of different

[1] *Review*, p. 231. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 278. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 238.

persons; their different degrees of nearness to us in various respects; and numberless circumstances in their state, situations, and characters, have the effect, and give just reason, in innumerable instances, for a preference of some of them to others."[1] Then follows a sentence which indicates that Price recognized the "conflict of obligations" and had a way of solving it. "Some of the circumstances may be of so little moment in themselves, that almost any appearance or possibility of greater good may suspend their influence; although, when there is no such appearance, and all other things are equal, they have full effect in determining what is *right*, or what *ought* to be done."[2]

(v) *Duty of veracity.* Under this head Price includes not only speaking the truth, but the keeping of promises. He distinguishes a promise from the expression of an intention. In the latter case, my statement refers to my state of mind at the present moment; in the former, to the future act that is to be done and the doing of which depends on myself.

(vi) *Duty of justice.* Justice is understood by Price to mean that part of duty which concerns property and commerce. Prior possession, prescription, donation, succession, etc., give rise to obligations regarding property.

Although the six parts of duty or virtue are distinct, they are not unconnected. An act of justice *may* be an act of gratitude and beneficence, not to mention an act of piety. But (what has so far only been touched upon) there may be a conflict of duties. The six principles enumerated may *combine or oppose* one another, thus creating uncertainty. Price makes clear that we have to face in practice a double uncertainty, though the certainty of the principles already enumerated is in no way weakened. (i) "An act promoting public happiness is *pro tanto* right"; this is certain. "Will this particular act promote the public happiness?"; this is a matter, frequently, of uncertainty. It is this uncertainty, not ignorance of moral princuiples, which has been largely responsible for the diversity of moral practice in different ages and different societies. Men have approved persecution, *not as such*, but as doing service to God. They have exposed children, as being conducive to the general welfare. "The rules of judging are universally the same. Those who approve, and those who disapprove, go upon the same principles. The disagreement is produced by the different application of them."[3] Further, the same

[1] *Review*, pp. 265–6.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 266. In using the term greater good Price seems to imply that the duty of gratitude is founded on the consequential good. He has, however, denied that this is so. But the contradiction can be resolved if we suppose that there is a good in gratitude that is not consequential, e.g. if the world is better merely in the fact that a benefit conferred by A on B is repaid by an action of B with reference to A.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 298.

actions in different ages have not the same effects. Herein lies a further reason for different moral practice springing from acceptance of the same moral principles. (ii) The more important uncertainty arises from the conflict of the different principles of virtue. "If we further recollect, that in order to judge of a case, and what is right in it, we ought to extend our view to all the different *heads* and principles of virtue, to examine how far each is concerned, and compare their respective influence and demands; and that at the same time (as just now explained) they often interfere; a second source of insuperable difficulties will appear."[1] The "whole rule of right" must take into account all the principles applicable to the particular case. Price's view seems to be that the right action is the one that best satisfies the demands of all the moral principles involved.

## V

### *Abstract and Practical Virtue*

The distinction which Price draws between abstract or absolute virtue and practical or relative virtue is necessitated by the fact, which appears on reflection, that excusable ignorance of the facts may lead a man to do, as his duty, an action which fuller knowledge would reveal was not his duty.

Abstract virtue belongs to the external action. It belongs to the action which "if he judged truly, he (i.e. the agent) would judge he ought to do."[2] Practical virtue belongs to the action which a man ought to do "*upon supposition* of his having such and such sentiments of things."[3] This latter is important, because "there is a sense in which it may be said, that what any being, in the sincerity of his heart, *thinks* he ought to do, he *indeed* ought to do."[4] There are then two senses of the words *right* and *wrong* according as they are used to refer to abstractly or practically virtuous actions. To know what is abstractly right, we need know only the nature of the agent and the situation in which he is; to know what is practically right we need know only his judgement on these matters.

It is a defect in Price's account on this point that he draws no distinction between the factual and the moral judgements of the agent. But in view of his steadfast conviction that "the grand lines and primary principles of morality are so deeply wrought into our hearts, and one with our minds, that they will be for ever legible"[5] it is almost certain that he considered only factual ignorance to be compatible with practical virtue.

Practical virtue requires liberty, intelligence, and the motive of

[1] *Review*, p. 295. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 308.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 308. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 309. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 302.

duty. It is clear from this last condition that Price excludes from practical virtue the doing of what a man thinks to be right from any other motive than that he thinks it to be right. What is abstractly right may be done from any motive; what is practically right must be done from duty. Abstract right is a virtue of the action; practical right a virtue of the agent. In judging the practical rightness we must remember "to conceive that only as, in strict propriety, *done* by a moral agent, which he *intends* to do."[1] Here we see that, on Price's theory, the final object of moral interest, the central core of ethics, is constituted by *the intentions of moral agents.*

That "an affection or inclination to rectitude cannot be separated from the view of it"[2] is sufficiently obvious in Price's view. And in speaking of reason in determining conduct, Price speaks in Kantian manner: "Rectitude is itself an end, an ultimate end, an end superior to all other ends, governing, directing, and limiting them. . . . Instinct *drives* and *precipitates*; but reason *commands.*"[3] But is the motive of duty the only motive which confers practical virtue on the intentions of agents? Price attempts to show analytically that it is. Since it is the intention that is judged, only that can be a virtuous intention which is the intending of virtue. To be virtuous an action must have as its end moral rectitude or virtue, i.e. must be done from a sense of duty.

Instinctive benevolence is no part of virtue; rational benevolence falls within duty. We may love a man for his instinctively benevolent nature, but praise him the less according as benevolence, rather than duty, is the motive of his actions. Philanthropy is praised more than paternal care because in it the sense of duty is more explicit. Prudent forethought for our own good is considered praiseworthy in some degree, and present indulgence not at all, because in the former a sense of duty is often involved. Hence the conclusion "that the virtue of an agent is always less in proportion to the degree in which natural temper and propensities fall in with his actions, instinctive, unintelligent principles operate, and rational reflection on what is good and right to be done, is wanting."[4]

However, in spite of this emphatic announcement of "virtue for virtue's sake" as the only virtue, Price falls down with all other eighteenth century moralists over the question of acting with a view to one's reward in the next world. Such action, he says, is virtuous! Because, presumably, it is from a sense of duty that we strive for our reward in heaven. But this seems a difficult doctrine.

[1] *Review*, p. 321. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 325.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 327. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 339.

## VI

### *Desires and Passions*

Besides reason, human beings possess a number of other principles of action. And Price has to give an account of these springs of action not inconsistent with his views concerning the place of reason in conduct. He tends on the whole, as may be expected, to find seeds of rationality in all the desires. He begins, however, by laying down a proposition reminiscent of Bishop Butler: "Each of our affections has its particular object and end, which we are led necessarily to desire. Thus *Self-love* leads us to desire and pursue private, and *Benevolence*, public happiness. *Ambition* is the love of fame, power, and distinction; and *Curiosity* is the love of what is new and uncommon. The objects of these and all our other affections, are desired for their own sakes; and constitute so many distinct ultimate ends and principles of action."[1]

It has been usual to ascribe all desires to instinct, i.e. an implanted propension distinct from reason. But the desire for happiness is not instinctive; it arises out of the knowledge of what happiness is. And, continues Price: "It is by no means, in general, an absurd method of explaining our affections, to derive them from the natures of things and beings. . . . To the preference and desire of *private happiness* by all beings, nothing more is requisite than to *know* what it is."[2]

So also with benevolence. Let us suppose a being purely reasonable. The nature of happiness would make him wish to possess it for himself. And is it credible that he would be indifferent about it for others? Such a being would assent to the proposition that happiness is better than misery. Similarly it could be shown of our other desires that they are founded on our knowledge of the natures of things.

We may distinguish between affections, i.e. the desires founded in the reasonable nature itself, such as self-love, benevolence, and the love of truth, and passions, i.e. these same when strengthened by instinctive determinations. Those tendencies in us which are merely *arbitrary*, e.g. hunger and thirst, we commonly call appetites or passions indifferently.

The theory that there is no ultimate object of desire beside private good is fallacious. What has given rise to this opinion, he thinks, is the not taking care to distinguish between desire and the pleasure implied in the gratification of desire. "That is, an object, such as fame, knowledge, or the welfare of a friend, is desired, not beccause we foresee, that, when obtained, it will give us pleasure; but, *vice versa*, the obtaining it gives us pleasure, because we previously

[1] *Review*, pp. 114–115. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 117.

desired it. . . . And, were there no such affections, the very foundations of private happiness and enjoyment would be destroyed."[1]

Again, "it is evidently contradictory to suppose, that the desire of the pleasure attending virtue, or arising from the reflection upon it, can in any instance be the sole motive to the practice of it. For a person to propose acting thus, is exactly the same as for him to propose acting from *one motive*, in order to have the pleasure of reflecting that he has acted from *another*."[2]

All a man's affections and appetites are, in their nature, disinterested; and though the subject of them be self and the effect of them the gratification of self, their direct tendency is always to some particular object different from private pleasure, as is shown by the fact that we often feel impulses which carry us away from what is to our own interest.

Of our several passions, some are subordinate to self-love; others are subordinate to the preservation and welfare of individuals. Reason, if we possessed it in a sufficiently high degree, would answer all the ends which these passions serve. Appetite, in the design of nature, is merely ministerial. And it is God who has provided in us appetites strong enough, and in general unerring enough, to support us in life while reason is weak and undeveloped. When reason *is* developed, these appetites may interfere with it, may even overcome it; but then, we allow them to do so and are to blame.

## VII

*Conclusion*

It would be foolish to deny that there are omissions and errors in Price's work. The results of modern psychology have made philosophers reluctant to claim for reason so important a part in determining men's conduct; and have revived in the plain man a belief in occult powers happily (or unhappily) foreign to eighteenth century thought. But there are not lacking signs that the pendulum has swung to its limit in the direction of irrationalism. If so, the rationalism of Richard Price may yet again be thought worthy of attention; and we may find not only comfort, but truth, in the noble panegyric of virtue with which he closes the *Review of Morals* and of which I cannot forbear to quote the following:

> "*Beauty* and *wit* will die, *learning* will vanish away, and all the *arts of life* be soon forgot; but *virtue* will remain for ever. This unites us to the whole rational creation, and fits us for conversing with any order of superior natures, and for a place in any part of God's works."[3]

[1] *Review*, p. 126. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 389. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 468.

*Note to Section III*

Price recognizes that not all our judgements of actions can claim objective validity. We not only judge actions to be right or wrong. We refer to them as amiable, vile, shocking, etc. All these latter words, Price admits, denote not any real qualities of action but the effects in us, i.e. the particular pleasures and pains attending the contemplation of the actions.

The question that arises is: Are these perceptions arbitrary? Or is there any universal connection between the objects and the pleasure and pain they cause in the mind? Such a connection does sometimes exist, Price answers. There are objects and ideas which have a natural aptitude to please or displease our minds. "One account, therefore, of the sentiments we are examining is; that such are the *natures* of certain actions, that, when perceived, as they are, by a reasonable being, there must result in him certain emotions and affections."[1] There are objects between which and the contemplative mind there is a necessary congruity or incongruity; e.g. supreme moral excellence. The aid of a sense is not necessary to make such a quality appear amiable. "What more is necessary to cause it to be loved and admired besides knowing it?" Again, a being void of all senses but knowing what order and happiness are, would receive pleasure from the survey of a universe where boundless order prevailed, and pain from a contrary prospect.

Virtue, it is easy to see, is naturally adapted to please every observing mind, and vice the contrary. I cannot perceive an action to be wrong without disapproving it, or right without approving it. I cannot approve or disapprove it without some feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. "Self-approbation, and self-reproach, are the chief sources of private happiness and misery. These are connected with, and entirely dependent upon, our consciousness of practising, or not practising virtue. . . . Virtue and vice, therefore, from the *natures of things*, are the immediate and principal, and the most constant and intimate causes of private happiness or misery."[2] These effects will be variable according to the circumstances of the agent. But still the essential tendencies continue the same. Reason is reinforced by a sense; "so that now, what appears worthy and right, has a positive determination of our natures in its favour, and is made the object of desire and delight, beyond what we should have otherwise felt." We have here both a perception of the understanding and a sentiment of the heart.

[1] *Review*, p. 92. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 95–96.

# DISCUSSION

## *FREEDOM AND PERSONALITY AGAIN*

Professor Taylor's article with this title in the January number of Philosophy (XVII, 65) brings to light a possible divergence in the use of terms. He is maintaining that we may bring a genuinely open mind, without antecedent bias, to problems both of thought and of conduct; that assent to a proposition may be due simply to our conviction that the proposition is validly proved, and equally, the decision to do an act may be due simply to our conviction that the act is right (p. 33). I agree, but I had thought of this as part of determinist doctrine, whereas Professor Taylor presents it as the case against determinism. He contends (p. 26) that "intelligence (or rationality) is a principle of indetermination within us"; whereas I should have intended to express exactly the same thing if I had called it the most important principle of determination.

I say to a more gifted friend, "I can't get these accounts right; do look through them. You will be sure to see what is wrong." I am confident that he will produce the right answer; and, since the right answer is already determined by the nature of things though veiled from me, my confidence implies that the answer he will produce is similarly determined. Looked at in one way, the cause of its production is the evidence contained in the figures; looked at in another way, the cause is a precedent event, namely the conjunction of an intelligent and unbiassed mind with a fairly simple problem. "*Datum est etiam quaesitum*, the subsequent event is also specified in every particular." But Professor Taylor, quoting this from Leibniz (p. 27), calls it determinism, and so do I.

To approach the matter in another way: The open-minded man is resolved to try to come to the right conclusion or to do the right thing. Meanwhile, says Professor Taylor (pp. 28–9 and 33), he is in a state of incomplete determination, or partial determination. This, I think, is not the metaphysician's but the psychologist's use of the word: the man's mind is not yet made up in detail: the mental process has not reached its term. In which sense is Professor Taylor speaking when he goes on (p. 33), "It is undetermined as yet whether the evidence directs the assertion of $p$, or whether the moral law calls for the doing of $A$"? If the metaphysical sense is intended, my difficulty is that surely there subsists already, in obstinate potency, the right answer in the accounts and the right way under the moral law. The point under discussion is the further step of saying, "The honest and intelligent mind, in a situation to which it is equal, will find that answer and will choose that way." Both Professor Taylor and I wish to say this, but I have been in the habit of counting it a determinist statement, whilst he uses the opposite name.

I find that Bosanquet, setting forth a similar doctrine in his *Principle of Individuality and Value*, calls it a doctrine of "determinateness," and that he lends support to Professor Taylor by saying that "determinateness and determinism are in principle opposed" (op. cit., p. 342). On the other hand it seems clear from the whole trend of his work[1] that he would consider it

[1] E.g. in Lectures III–V in the same book.

a very dangerous ambiguity to say that "intelligence is a principle of indetermination."

Pending agreement on the use of words, we had better at any rate be aware of the possible divergences, and guard ourselves against confusion from that source when we are seeking to deepen our understanding of things.

HELEN WODEHOUSE.

*Professor Taylor's Reply*

IT seems to me that Miss Wodehouse and myself are arguing at cross-purposes. As she says, my sense of the word "determination" is the *psychologist's* sense, and so, I submit, it ought to be, for the simple reason that the theory I am anxious to dispute is itself a psychological theory, and it is therefore the psychologist's sense of the word *determination* with which I am concerned. Let me illustrate the point by reference to her own examples. She says to a more gifted friend, "I can't get these accounts right; do look through them. You will be sure to see what is wrong." And the reason why she is sure is that "the right answer is already determined by the nature of things." This can only mean that there is a definite "answer" to a given sum which is the only *correct* answer. This I am not concerned to dispute. What I do dispute is what the "scientific determinist" is bound by his own principles to assume, that there is only one answer which the more gifted friend *can give*. If the friend has only a very insufficient time allowed for the examination of the complicated account, or is distracted during his or her examination by personal worries, it is quite possible that he or she will be puzzled by some obscurity in the complicated account, and will fall into some error, and I do not know what the sense or magnitude of that error will prove to be. Take a similar case. I find a line in *Cymbeline*, or some other play of Shakespeare, for which there is no authority other than the First Folio, which is obviously unmeaning. There must be some corruption here and I am at a loss to think of any suitable correction. Here again I may be sure that Shakespeare wrote certain definite words and that they made an appropriate sense, and that some friend who is an acute and profound Shakespearian scholar is more likely than I am myself to divine rightly what those words were. But this is no more than likely; there is only one set of words which Shakespeare wrote, but it does not follow that there is only one possible conjectural emendation which my friend the Shakespearian scholar can suggest. Similarly Miss Wodehouse goes on to say that when we have to make a decision how to act, it is already determined by the moral law what that way of acting is. That may be so, but the question I am considering is not whether the moral law definitely determines what is the *right* way to act but whether anything determines, before I make my decision, in what way *I* shall decide to act. It is on that point that I disagree with the "scientific determinist." He says that a series of events in the past have already settled my decision for me; what I say is that these events *influence* my decision but do not necessitate it. Just in the same way, if I am told to find a solution of the "indeterminate" equation $y^2 = 2x^2 - 1$, the *data* of the equation rule out as indefinite number of values for the *quaesita* $y$ and $x$, but they also leave an indefinite number of possible solutions. So my adoption of a guiding policy in action does not commit me beforehand in respect of the details of the acts in which the policy will be embodied. Indeed it would be impossible for an agent each of whose acts was determined in advance by the series of its past acts to pursue a "policy" at all, and this is why the whole hog scientific determinists are so anxious to reduce all human conduct to a series of "conditioned reflexes."

A. E. TAYLOR.

# NEW BOOKS

*Reason and Intuition.* By A. C. Ewing, M.A., Litt.D., Lecturer in Moral Science, University of Cambridge. Annual Philosophical Lecture, Henrietta Hertz Trust, British Academy, Humphrey Milford. 1941. Pp. 43. Price 2s. 6d. net.

"If there is one thing more characteristic of the intellectual climate of the world during the last ten years than any other, it is the widespread distrust of reason." These are the opening words of Dr. Ewing's address. His aim is to examine some of the causes of this distrust, and then to suggest a cure for it. His cure consists in pointing out to "Irrationalists" and "Rationalists" alike that the antithesis between reason and intuition is a mistaken one, since reason itself contains an intuitive element. To make the dose effective, he analyses in some detail the relation between the intuitive and the discursive functions of reason, and offers some very interesting suggestions for removing the difficulties to which the notion of rational intuition naturally gives rise.

What then are the causes of this revolt against reason? Dr. Ewing mentions a number, though he does not claim that his list is complete. The first is "the relative decline of Christian orthodoxy, which professed to have a ready-made system of the universe," together with the failure of professional metaphysicians to produce any agreed alternative. Another is the prevalence of a Positivistic or Descriptionist conception of Natural Science. The scientists themselves have openly abandoned the claim which their predecessors made "to be increasing human knowledge of the fundamental nature of reality as opposed to the appearances which present themselves to the senses" (p. 5). Instead, they insist that they are only correlating human experiences, and that they are not in the least concerned with the "why" of phenomena but only with the "how." If we could believe that the human mind is capable of attaining cognition of reality by methods quite different from those of Natural Science, this defeatist attitude of the scientists (for so Dr. Ewing regards it) would have no particular ill effects. But we can no longer believe this, or at least very few of us can; for all the main metaphysical arguments of the past appear to have been refuted. Moreover, science itself, even if we accept the positivistic conception of it, is based throughout upon inductive reasoning, and no logician is able to explain how inductive reasoning can be valid. To be sure, the logicians of the past could not solve the problem of Induction either; but they are happily unaware of their failure, whereas we are acutely aware of ours.

To make matters worse, the Psycho-analytical doctrine of Rationalization—vulgarly called "wishful thinking"—has bitten deeply into our souls. Our reason, we find, is often employed in inventing sophistical arguments to bolster up conclusions which we already wish to believe. (I am not sure that Dr. Ewing is quite right here. The *arguments* of the "rationaliser" are often valid enough; the error, quite frequently, lies in his choice of premises. Many lunatics are very consistent reasoners.) Again, when we turn to ethics, or to political theory which Dr. Ewing regards as a branch of ethics, we find ourselves confronted with conflicting ethical intuitions, and there is apparently no way of reconciling them. This difficulty, like the Problem of Induction, has indeed always been with us. But nowadays it is more obvious

and more disquieting than it used to be. For in former times there was a widespread *de facto* agreement about ultimate ends; but nowadays there is not. Finally, when we look out upon the mess into which the contemporary world has got itself, we are almost inclined to doubt whether men are rational beings at all. At any rate such reason as they have seems but a feeble instrument, since it has utterly failed to prevent the most devastating political and economic catastrophes.

All the items mentioned in Dr. Ewing's list seem to me to be both real and important, even if some of them, perhaps, were not so much causes preceding the "revolt against reason," but rather manifestations of a revolt which was already well under way. Nevertheless, the picture has another side, which Dr. Ewing has omitted entirely. Whatever doubts the learned may feel about the philosophical foundation of science, scientific *technique* dominates the lives of all of us, to an extent which is unparalleled in human history. And scientific technique is a manifestation of reason, if anything is. We find something similar in the sphere of economics and politics. At first sight, we see only the undisputed reign of unreason. But this, after all, is only half the truth. However irrational we may be about political or economic ends, we are more rational about the *means* than any civilization has ever been. What we call "organization" has gone to lengths previously undreamed of; and organization again is a manifestation of reason. Indeed, it might well be said that in these two respects—scientific technique, political and economic organization—we trust reason not too little but too much. We are apt to think that there are no evils which cannot be remedied by bigger and better technological institutes, by more and more elaborate political and economic "planning." Curiously enough, the very people who are so deeply shocked by "modern Irrationalism" sometimes complain equally loudly about what they call the increasing mechanization of modern life. But they cannot have it both ways. Mechanization, in all its forms, is a manifestation of reason.

But it is time to turn from the disease, as Dr. Ewing sees it, to the cure which he proposes. The enemies of reason appeal to intuition, which is supposed to be something outside the sphere of reason altogether. But the antithesis, he maintains, is a mistaken one. Reason is not to be equated with reason*ing*. That is only part of it. There is such a thing as rational intuition; reason is intuitive as well as discursive. Indeed, were this not so, reasoning itself would be impossible; not merely because reasoning requires premises, and there must come a stage at which they cannot be proved by previous reasoning, but also on another ground. Even within any one piece of reasoning, we must just "see" intuitively that the premises entail the conclusion. And this applies to probable reasoning, no less than to strict proof. In probable reasoning too (for instance in inductive or analogical argument) we must just "see" that the premises do increase—or decrease—the probability of the conclusion.

No doubt Dr. Ewing is perfectly right. Yet his point can also be put in another way, which makes it seem much less exciting. Is he saying any more than this, that categorical reasoning ("p, therefore q") presupposes hypothetical reasoning? For "p entails q" may also be written "if p, then q"; at least, many logicians think so. And the "seeing" that if p then q is just what is ordinarily called hypothetical reason*ing*, though of course you may call it intuition if you like. It is true that Dr. Ewing would apparently dispute this (p. 8, *fin.*). He seems to think that even when you are reasoning hypothetically, you must still *in addition* "see" intuitively that the premises entail the conclusion. But surely this is a mistake? The "intuition" that the conclusion is entailed by the premises is not something other than the hypothetical

reasoning, and presupposed by it; it *is* the hypothetical reasoning itself, under another and more grandiloquent name. And the same comment may be made when Dr. Ewing applies his argument to probable reasoning. He says that when one argues "p, therefore probably q" one has to see intuitively that p increases the probability of q. But what is it that you see? You see that if p then probably q; and this feat of intuition is exactly what most people call hypothetical reason*ing*.

It is true that when we come to formulate the *principles* of reasoning (whether demonstrative or probable) we shall have to use what is called intuitive induction, as Dr. Ewing also points out. We shall have to "see" that what holds good for this p and this q also holds good for any p and any q which resemble them in relevant respects. But this, though true, is not very exciting; for intuitive induction has been admitted by logicians ever since Aristotle's time. It is only the name which is comparatively new; and not very felicitous either, since intuitive induction has nothing whatever to do with the induction upon which the Natural Sciences depend.

However, Dr. Ewing has other strings to his bow, and I think he is quite correct in maintaining that reason does include other functions besides reasoning, and some of them may well be called intuitive. In this connection he makes a very interesting suggestion, designed to remove the objections which philosophers have often brought against the notion of rational intuition. It has generally been assumed that rational intuition, if it occurs at all, must be at once *infallible* and *clear*. But we find in practice that alleged intuitions conflict; what one person or epoch finds self-evident, another finds doubtful or even false. Again, a philosopher may profess to find it self-evident, for instance, that Nature is uniform; he may say that he just "sees" this, and that it neither has any proof nor needs any. But when we ask him to tell us clearly what it is that he sees, we either find he cannot; or if he can, what he tells us turns out to be so complicated that we cannot believe it was ever genuinely self-evident, even though we may be ready to admit that it is true.

To meet these two difficulties, Dr. Ewing makes the revolutionary suggestion that rational intuition is capable of being both *erroneous* and *confused*; not that it always is so—our intuition of the Law of Contradiction, for instance, is both clear and certain—but that the mere fact that a rational cognition is intuitive is not in itself sufficient to guarantee either its clearness or its veracity. If it be objected that the phrase "erroneous intuition" is a contradiction in terms, he replies that this is a merely verbal point, though he is prepared to substitute the expression "ostensible intuition" for "intuition" if need be. The essential thing is that here (as in belief) our psychological attitude may be the same whether the object of it is a true proposition or a false one. Examples of confused and partly erroneous intuition are "the epoch-making philosophical and religious intuitions of great men." Indeed, Dr. Ewing suggests that such confused and partly erroneous intuitions (which lesser men also may have) perhaps form a necessary basis of any advance in any study at all (p. 27). These last contentions seem to me both true and important; though I am not sure that these cognitive acts would be any the worse if we just called them "guesses"—"inspired guesses" if you like—and avoided the insidious emotional overtones of the word "intuition." He also suggests that such confused non-inferential cognitions may "form the basis of the categories of substance and cause, not to mention the part they play in ethics or religion" (*ibid.*). It is to be hoped that Dr. Ewing will elaborate these points in more detail on some other occasion. Certainly it is a grave error to suppose that if we are not thinking clearly, our thought must therefore be valueless. It may well be that the most fundamental thoughts, and the

most original ones, are precisely those which are most likely to be confused; and even if the minds which think them never succeed in getting them clear, perhaps it is better to be confused than platitudinous.

Dr. Ewing points out that if we revise the traditional conception of intuition in this drastic manner, some of the traditional objections to intuition disappear. It becomes possible to *test* our intuitions by what he calls the coherence test (though like other writers who have used this language, he does not analyse the elusive metaphor of "coherence" so fully as might be wished). Intuitive reason must be tested by reason*ing*; by following out the consequences which our intuitions would entail or make probable, and seeing whether these consequences are supported by what we know or rationally believe already. However, as he has argued before that there is an intuitive element even in reasoning itself, he is able to maintain that the advocates of intuition and the advocates of coherence are not opposed to each other, as they commonly think they are; on the contrary, coherence and intuition are mutually complementary.

In conclusion, Dr. Ewing illustrates his contentions by examining in some detail a particularly difficult type of example: the conflict, or apparent conflict, between differing intuitions in the field of ethics. He makes a number of very sensible suggestions as to the way in which the contending "intuitors" might eventually be reconciled, though many of them, I think, would commend themselves to philosophers of all schools, whether they accepted his own particular views about the relation of reason and intuition or not.

I am afraid that the review is far from doing justice to the elaborate and close-knit argument of Dr. Ewing's lecture, though I hope I have at any rate succeeded in convincing the reader that it will well repay careful study. I would, however, like to mention one topic which he has omitted. When people talk about intuition and oppose it to reason, they are sometimes thinking of mystical or quasi-mystical experience. Such experience certainly appears to have a cognitive as well as an emotional aspect, and it must certainly be regarded as a form of intuition. Yet it is not rational intuition, at least not in the sense in which Dr. Ewing uses that phrase, though doubtless the Neoplatonists would have called it so. It may well be relevant to some of the topics discussed by Dr. Ewing, and I think that in any complete account of the antithesis between Reason and Intuition it ought not to be neglected.

H. H. Price.

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*Mind and Deity*. By John Laird. (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd. Price 10s. 6d.)

This volume contains the second series of Professor Laird's Gifford Lectures. Gifford Lectures ought to be approached with a certain reverence, for most of them represent the results of a lifetime of thought; and however meagre some of the harvests have been, reckoned in terms of positive conclusions, there is always instruction and encouragement to be derived from the contemplation of a mind engaged in a long grapple with the ultimate problems. The long line of volumes of Gifford Lectures might be the subject of profitable reflection, for surely it is a remarkable quality of the universe that it should produce so many and so various interpretations of itself.

Gifford Lectures are also impossible to review, because for the most part they touch upon the whole range of questions with which philosophy has been concerned, from epistemology to the theory of value. Any adequate notice of Professor Laird's book would summarize and comment on his

treatment of every topic. This would not only be tedious but would require as much space as the original text. I must choose the less laborious method of giving a general impression. And here the author helps us by a frank personal statement in which he gives us *his* impression of the book. "The study of philosophy," he says, "has been so large a part of my life that there is a very narrow margin of difference between my beliefs and my philosophy." He confesses that the preparation of these lectures has developed in his mind an attitude more favourable to theism than he formerly adopted. "For myself I may say that I did not appreciate the force of theism when I began this inquiry. . . . I may even have thought that theism was a decrepit metaphysical vehicle harnessed to poetry. I do not think so now. While I do not think that my theistic argument is conclusive, and am of opinion that very few theistic proofs establish a high degree of probability, I also incline to the belief that theistic metaphysics is stronger than most, and that metaphysics is not at all weak in principle despite the strain that it puts upon the human intellect. It is quite impossible, I believe, to refute theism. A verdict of 'not proven' is easier to obtain, largely because proof is so difficult and its standards so exacting. If plausibility were enough, theism is much more plausible than most other metaphysical conclusions." On this interesting summing up many observations might be made. Does Professor Laird even now appreciate the full force of theism? Sufficient weight, it might be urged, has not been given to the convergence of several lines of thought towards the same end. Even if it be true that no "proof" gives more than a high degree of probability and some fall short of this, the concurrence of probable conclusions gives rise to a degree of probability far greater than that to be obtained by any single argument. Further, it may be suggested that the hypothesis of theism carries with it the idea of revelation, for it would be difficult to suppose that God, if He exists, should have made no communication of Himself or had left the question of His being and nature to be resolved by a dialectic which the vast majority of the human race is unable to understand, while conversely it would seem unlikely that dialectic in itself and without reference to revelation could attain the practical certainty which religion needs. For this reason I think it is a misfortune that Professor Laird should have so resolutely denied himself all appeal to religious experience. The fact that he has himself, as he tells us, no first-hand acquaintance with it does not abolish it from the data of the inquiry. After all, theism has a relation with religious experience which can be claimed by no other metaphysical theory. It comes before us, not as a scheme thought out by an individual philosopher or group of philosophers, but as a belief which has emerged from the long life of mankind; it is a doctrine which has been articulated by thinkers who were interpreting a living tradition. Thus it may seem that theism starts with a probability in its favour; it has on its side the same kind of massive witness of common sense as the belief in the reality of an external world.

This leads by a natural transition to Mr. Laird's discussion of the ontological argument, which, it is perhaps superfluous to say, is acute and suggestive. Anselm's "proof" seems to be sharper than a two-edged sword dividing thinkers into two groups, each of which regards the other with amazement at its lack of understanding. Our author rejects the argument for the familiar reasons and finds little value in what he calls "the Ontological Assertion." It would be absurd in a review to develop a defence of the ontological argument and of slight interest to record the fact that the reviewer still believes the ontological argument to be the basis of all metaphysics. Perhaps I may be allowed to remark that the word "assertion" is not easily distinguished from "assump-

tion" and, if that is its meaning, it could not be accepted by those who hold the validity of the argument. The "assertion" is not, so the contention runs, one which may or may not be made; it is implied in the activity of mind as such, which seeks unity and wholeness and cannot think them away, in spite of all appearances. It seems to me that any assertions made about "nature" or "the Universe," if they refer to definite subjects, presuppose an ontological argument, since neither is empirically given.

One is tempted to go on from here to consider the admirable chapter on "Value and Existence," but space forbids. Perhaps I might comment on one relatively minor point. Professor Laird repeats the familiar reproof to those who naïvely ask why anything at all exists. "It is senseless," he writes, "to ask why being is made. There can be no reason for existence. There can only be rational connections within existence." I have sometimes wished to write a "liber pro insipiente" on behalf of these senseless persons. Are they really so foolish as these confident words would imply? Theism at least has supposed that there was some meaning in the question, "Why does anything exist?" One of its answers is addressed to God, "For Thy pleasure they are and were created," which, being interpreted, means among other things that existence has value for God. No doubt it is true that for any other metaphysic except that which holds the transcendence of God, there is no answer to the question, but that may be one reason for accepting the theistic view. When we ask why existence exists we generally mean why do persons exist and why do events take place? To ask why there is differentiation within the whole and why there is constant change may be questions which are hard to answer, but I cannot see that they are unmeaning.

I am not sure after all that this is the best method of reviewing so comprehensive a volume and I must guard against giving a false idea of either its scope or its quality. Let it be plainly said then that Professor Laird has given us a new consideration of old problems in the course of which he criticizes idealism in all its forms, surveys the theistic arguments, discusses some of the divine attributes, and offers a tentative defence of Pantheism, and that in every chapter there is vigorous thought uttered in vigorous words. The reader of this review will at least have gathered that it is a book which stirs up thought in others. Theologians should read it.

W. R. Matthews.

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*The Special Theory of Relativity*. By Herbert Dingle. (Methuen's Monographs on Physical Subjects.) (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1940. Pp. vii + 94.)

The Special Theory of Relativity was created by Einstein in 1905, when he extended the Newton-Galileo Principle of Relativity from mechanics to electrodynamics. According to this principle there exists in the universe a class of frames (called "inertial"), in uniform relative motion, with respect to which the equations of motion of physical objects are invariant. In order to bring Maxwell's electromagnetic theory within the scope of this principle, Einstein found it necessary to postulate, in addition, the invariance, with respect to all inertial frames, of the *finite* velocity of light.

The importance of Einstein's pioneer research was two-fold. On the one hand, it produced simple and beautiful explanations of a number of physical experiments, besides the celebrated one due to Michelson and Morley, which had provided the original *point d'appui*. The theory thus gave one a new feeling of command over a wide range of phenomena. On the other hand, it raised and

helped to answer a number of deep questions about the epistemological foundations of physics, particularly questions concerning the concepts of length and time.

Since Einstein's first paper, research on relativity has been characterized by two distinct periods of development. In the first period, culminating in the General Theory of Relativity, in 1916, the main object was to extend the relativistic principle to wider classes of frames. The validation of this extension lay in three appeals to observation, the famous Einstein tests. The chief field of application was the solar system and the nearest stars. In the second period, from 1930, the general object has been to investigate the characteristics and behaviour of the universe of extra-galactic nebulae. This has led to an entirely new orientation of the whole subject in the work of Milne, from 1932. More and more emphasis has come to be laid on the logical and epistemological development of physical theory.

In the book at present under review, Professor Dingle gives his own treatment of the foundations of relativity. Only one chapter is devoted to the General Theory, and the major part of the book is intended by the author to be an introduction to Professor McCrea's valuable little monograph in the same series, *Relativity Physics*.

Dingle is a physicist rather than a mathematician. Consequently, his chapter on the experimental foundations is stimulating and up to date. Unfortunately, this cannot be said of the book as a whole, for the author does not appear to have a clear conception of how to build up the theory rigorously and in the light of recent research. A few instances of his attitude will be given, showing how it serves to augment rather than to dispel confusion.

First, Dingle begins very hazily, on p. 1, by stating that the Principle of Relativity is that "there is no meaning in absolute motion. By absolute motion is meant motion assignable to a body or locatable phenomenon (e.g. a spot of light, region of high temperature, etc.) without reference to some other body or locatable phenomenon." This type of absolute motion is obviously without meaning, for the very idea of motion involves a relation between two things. Indeed, on p. 27, Dingle himself writes: "In all descriptions of physical processes we must adopt some standard of rest; otherwise we can give no meaning to velocity. The principle of relativity says that there is no natural, absolute standard. . . ." This last statement is very different from the tautology, dignified by the title of Principle, with which the book begins.

Second, Dingle develops his version of the theory by taking length as the fundamental concept. In justifying this choice, he remarks (p. 29) "the unit of length is the only unit in physics that is defined independently of any other unit." In a rough and ready sense the unit of length may be conveniently defined as the distance between two marks on a piece of metal or as the wave-length of monochromatic light, but in developing the theory of relativity the limitations of our classical laboratory concepts are displayed. We have to devise precise rules for comparing lengths measured by different observers and to consider what is meant by saying that two lengths are equal. The inadequacy of the classical rigid body concept is then apparent. The implicit dependence of length measurement on epoch is revealed, suggesting that time measurement may be more fundamental than space measurement. These questions have been considered in a great detail by many investigators, but nowhere in the present book does Dingle make the least reference to them or even suggest that such questions merit consideration.

Third, this failure of Dingle to get down to fundamentals results in his

constructing a theory which is no more than a purely *ad hoc* patching-up of classical physics, so as to get the right answers. Thus, at the beginning of chapter 3, Dingle introduces his own version of Special Relativity with the following statement concerning the measurement of length, "The quantity that is physically important is not $l$, as ordinarily defined, but $l\sqrt{1 - v^2/c^2}$, where $v$ is the velocity of the object concerned in the direction in which the length is measured with respect to whatever standard of rest we choose." This 'physically important' measure of length depends, of course, on the measure of time!

Finally, and most significantly, in his derivation of the Lorentz formulae, the keystone of the theory, Dingle assumes the necessary results, in terms of the "old" definition of length ($l$), without the slightest attempt to justify them. In fine, Dingle seems to have missed the main point of the theory, which is that classical kinematics needs to be replaced by a new kinematics *rigorously* derived from precise concepts of length and time. It is not sufficient merely to tinker with our ordinary intuitive ideas. Because he appreciated this vital *epistemological* point, Einstein was the first to grasp the inner meaning of the Lorentz formulae and thereby to make a fundamental advance. It would seem that Dingle is still living in the afterglow of pre-Einstein physics, for his methods are intrinsically of a similar type to those of Fitzgerald and Lorentz.

G. J. WHITROW.

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*East and West.* By RENÉ GUÉNON, translated by WILLIAM MASSEY. (London: Luzac & Co. 6s.)

I find it difficult to describe the impression that this singular book has made on one "western" reader. It is not the mere crank book that a hasty reader might think it. The author, M. René Guénon, is a competent student of philosophy, and for three-fourths of the way he seems to be preparing the ground for a new and interesting exposition of eastern thought. Then I discover that this thought is incommunicable except to a few unnamed persons called "the elect," of whom I am not one and can never, on the conditions M. Guénon lays down, become one. I should imagine that the great majority of "westerners" will find themselves in the same plight, and for all these the book will be, to put it bluntly, a sell. To say this will not at all disturb M. Guénon. He will reply that it is our fault and just what he expected.

His method in the first part of his book is perfectly logical. He takes the principal western philosophies and demolishes them one by one. Without going into detail, it is sufficient to say that his argument is roughly on the lines of the late Lord Balfour's philosophical writings and directed in the same way to showing the inadequacy both of "naturalism" and "idealism" and their various derivatives. But whereas Lord Balfour wrote in a brilliant and concise style, M. Guénon—assuming that his translator follows him—writes in a breathless non-stop manner which gives the reader a world of trouble before he discovers the comparative simplicity of his meaning. Though M. Guénon appears to think it new, the argument is as familiar as are the answers to it. No competent student of western philosophy is walking in darkness on these subjects, or needs to be reminded of the critical apparatus which has been brought to bear on them. But by this device M. Guénon presents us with a picture of the western philosopher as steeped in prejudice and ignorance, and therefore inaccessible to the higher wisdom of the East.

This situation appears to be incurable, for as a condition of becoming one

of the "elect" to whom the superior eastern will condescend to communicate his wisdom, the western philosopher must discard all that he (falsely) thinks to be knowledge and approach his eastern teacher with a prayer of humble access. It may safely be said that only a very small number of western philosophers will be willing to deal on these terms with the eastern sages, but, again, if I say this, I shall give equal satisfaction to M. Guénon and his anonymous eastern sages. It will confirm him in his belief that the West is unteachable and relieve them of the distasteful task of trying to enlighten the West. They are simply not interested in western ways of thinking and living; they are the repositories of the "true mysteries" which automatically defend themselves against prying curiosity.

Yet curiosity must be a little whetted about what is behind this veil, and M. Guénon gives us certain hints. The "metaphysical" truth which is in the keeping of the eastern has nothing to do with reason or logic or right and wrong or religion or anything that happens in the active life of men and women. It is beyond good and evil, beyond any formulated exposition of it, for that would bring it down to the "inferior plane of discourse and reason." Just as the German Nazi "thinks with his blood," so the eastern sage thinks with—what? Here I am pulled up, for it seems doubtful if the word "think," as the West understands it, applies at all to this situation. The sage lives rather than thinks, lives in a purely static super-individual world which has no contact with the actual active world in which western men and western philosophers live and are obliged to live. It escapes M. Guénon's notice that the immense majority of eastern men and women are in the same plight.

Practically it amounts to a denial that philosophy has anything to do with life. It is "the secret" of a few sages in the East, and at best can only be communicated to a few "elect" in the West. M. Guénon vehemently denies that his doctrine has any resemblance to theosophy or occultism. He will have nothing to do with the Mahatmas and professional mystics who ply their calling in the drawing-rooms of London and New York. But to the student of philosophy it is a very thin line which divides "secret doctrine" from occultism, and he will wish to be assured that what cannot be explained or expounded makes in some degree sense. This, of course, does not mean that the western philosophy or even western religion has plumbed, or supposes itself to have plumbed, the depths of reality, but it does postulate that this reality bears some relation to life as we know it.

The West is by no means in an arrogant mood. It will listen patiently to all that the East can fairly say to it about the plight in which it has been landed by its worship of material success, its misuse of science, its neglect of true philosophy. But it naturally wants to know something about these eastern teachers. Who are they and what are their credentials? Is there such a thing as an "eastern mind" covering all the varieties of eastern religion and thought—a common denominator between Hindu and Mahommedan, *ahimsa* and *jehad*, Confucius and Buddha, Gandhi and Jinnah? M. Guénon takes Hinduism as the generalized type. But a visit to Benares leaves the westerner in a complete puzzle about the common factor in Hinduism. The College of advanced studies teaching a mystic monotheism goes its way side by side with the cheerful polytheism of the many temples and shrines; the astrologer has his allotted place by the sacred stream; the unity of all in all is somehow adjusted to the sanctity of the caste system, the exclusion of the untouchables, and all that it implies in the life of the country. M. Guénon would of course say that it is the infirmity of the western mind which causes it to lose its way among these apparent contradictions, but it seems to me more probable that he is straining language to suit his thesis.

It is, perhaps, worth while to point out, for the benefit of M. Guénon's eastern readers, that, so far from the West despising or neglecting the East, there never was a larger number than there is to-day of western students making a serious study of eastern religion and thought. But these "orientalists" incur M. Guénon's special displeasure. They are, it seems, even more incapable than the rest of us of entering into the true wisdom of the East. There one must leave it. J. A. SPENDER.

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*Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*. By J.-J. ROUSSEAU. With an introduction by F. C. Green. (Cambridge University Press. 1941. Pp. 142. Price 5s. net.)

It was a happy idea to make this piece available in a handy form, especially in these days when the presses and bookshops of France are closed to us. The students who know Rousseau's political thought only by his *Contrat Social* have a delight in store in this equally brilliant and equally perverse early essay. Those whose interest is primarily in its content will probably wish that they could have had it in translation. It would translate well, since its excellences of style are less those of sensuousness than of concision, balance of phrase against phrase, and sheer clarity of thought. It is strewn with epigrams —"The savage and the civilized man differ so deeply in sentiment and inclination that what makes the one supremely happy would reduce the other to despair"; the dominant class "would cease to be happy if the common people ceased to be miserable"; "it is hard to induce obedience in one who has not the ambition to command."

It is an essay in deductive anthropology, a speculative sketch of prehistoric man. Rousseau had obviously read many travellers' tales of savages, but, altogether ahead of his own and several later generations, he explicitly denies the identification of the modern savage with the primitive man. He constructs his picture of the original state of human nature by the apparently effortless exercise of an astonishingly fertile and sure and searching imagination, at the level where imagination and rational insight are indistinguishable. His constant care is to avoid attributing to early man any needs, desires, or practices that presuppose developed conceptions. Hence, he observes acutely, early man was neither ambitious nor servile.

His thesis is that inequality began, and has increased, with the institution of political society. The only original inequalities—of strength and agility—could have counted little with individuals who met rarely, were not naturally inimical, and thought only of independence and ease. Not pugnacious except in the service of a need, neither reflective nor provident enough to be selfish, and instinctively pained by the spectacle of the suffering of their like (pity alone surviving into the political stage, to be the ground of such few social virtues as there be), the first men lived their solitary lives with no ills but wounds and old age. Disease comes only when nature is left behind: "If nature has destined us to be healthy, the level of reflection is unnatural, the man who thinks being thus an animal depraved." No one oppresses another, because he has no prospective advantage to lead him to do so: if anyone did manage "to compel me to provide for his wants while he remained idle, he would have to face the task of not letting me out of his sight for a moment, and of keeping me securely bound while he slept lest I should escape or kill him; that is, he would have to take upon himself a trouble greater than either that he was seeking to avoid or that which he was imposing on me. After all these precautions, should his vigilance relax but for a moment, a

sudden noise would turn his eyes, and then—a few paces into the forest and my chains would be broken, and he would see me no more."

When stable unions of the sexes began, the incidents of family life carried language beyond the stage of mere cries, enlarged needs, and brought about the first differentiation of manner of life, the female staying at home while the male hunted abroad. The idea of specialization of labour fully appeared when a more settled form of existence, induced by the loose association of several families, made possible if not the discovery at least the preservation of the discovery of iron and agriculture. For the exploitation of these, men first felt the need of one another, and it was thus that dependence and inequality came into being. The new arts involved property, and with differences of industry and talent inequalities of possession grew. Here was the root of all man's subsequent wretchedness; for the protection of property involved justice, the setting up of laws and of magistrates to administer them, and this new order added to the other inequalities those of political power and social prestige, the vices of ambition and servility, and—the biggest ill of all—the perfecting of the rational faculty which alone enabled men to abuse the simple functions which had hitherto operated under the unerring control of instinct. The formation of one society evoked the organization of neighbouring families also into societies, for protection. The corrupting influence of new desires passing into needs, of new passions, of new inequalities, of individual and collective egoism, precipitated disturbances within each society and wars between the societies. The extreme point of social depravity is reached in despotism, where all but the ruler are brought back to one level again, and where rule rests, as any possibility of it did in the state of nature, on force; but this resemblance between the beginning and the end is superficial, for they are divided by the great gulf that lies between scarcely disturbed happiness and almost unrelieved misery.

Rousseau cannot find any plausibility in the explanation of society by conquest, or by *patria potestas*, or by the allegation of a natural servility. He is, however, his own critic as well as the critic of others. He knows that his history is as imaginary as it is imaginative, but he knows too that his art is reasoned. The points he has sought to illustrate are that the first men were unsocial, irrational, amoral (the *noble* savage is not Rousseau's conception), and very happy; that by conjunctions of circumstance their latent rationality evolved, leading them to discoveries that made them need each other; that this condition brought them to property and this to the recognition of a contract for its preservation; and that the political state, itself thus necessitated, in turn necessitated changes in human nature which have brought more and worse ills than the political institution was introduced to remove.

Here the essay ends, not because Rousseau was content to be a pessimist (though his criterion is entirely hedonistic), but because he has proved the limited thesis he had set himself. His prescription for the palliation of social misery is in the familar *Contrat Social*. He has emphasized as a principle, however, a point which the later work in the end tends to obscure, namely, that life and freedom being, unlike property, aspects of man himself, cannot be alienated by any contract, and that the protection of them is the ultimate ground of any justifiable political authority.

Professor Green writes an extremely able introduction but makes it too brief, confining it to a précis of the essay and not even giving the date of writing or of publication. There are no notes except Rousseau's own generous ones, nor is there any mention that Rousseau's preface, and his fairly lengthy dedication of the essay to the Republic of Geneva (dated June 12, 1754), have been omitted.

T. E. Jessop.

*Experience and Substance.* By De Witt H. Parker. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. 1941. Pp. x + 371. Price $3.00.)

This essay, prompted according to the author by the need of a study of general metaphysical problems as a preliminary to a metaphysics of value, examines the usual topics ranging from method and analysis of experience, substance, universals, matter, space, time, infinity, relations, causality, to value and the Eternal. The whole argument is developed in a closely knit and elaborate manner, and will repay the effort of careful study both in regard to the positions reached and the path by which they are reached. What gives particular importance to the work is that, firstly, it is frankly empiricist, and secondly, primarily ontological and constructive. The fact that the instrument of knowledge is the concept and that metaphysical concepts must be derived from and illustrated in experience, and must for purposes of speculation be applied to a reality beyond experience, makes the positive characterization of reality by no means easy but not impossible and does not, as this essay shows, necessitate the scepticism so often associated with empiricism. That traditional problems are formulated within the framework of empiricism, and often in consequence appear in an altered and unfamiliar form, is something that is not confined to empiricism. The author is aware of the "dangers of unimaginative empiricism" (to use Whitehead's phrase) and hence he characterizes his own method as "speculative empiricism" or as "radical empiricism extended by the imagination."

The author consequently in several places diverges from and cuts across traditional empiricism. Claiming that experience reveals a distinction, much like that drawn by Berkeley, between sensa and activities, he finds here a basis for the notion of a self or a centre of experience, the permanent and highly organized essence of which is expressed in desire, the latter not to be regarded as a fleeting, unrelated, epiphenomenal fact; this is a view which shows his relation to Leibniz and which plays an important part in his argument, for it is the foundation on which he argues his theory of value as satisfaction or appeasing of desire and on which he defends the notion of causality against Hume's criticisms. Causality is defended not merely against Hume but also against the modern claim that it is no longer required in science, though he is prepared to reject the traditional deterministic implications attributed to it. He defends also the notion of substance. On the other hand, he opposes the traditional notion of material bodies, of the mathematical continuum, and of an infinite collection, considering that mathematics does not need the latter and that an infinite series can be conceived as rules for the construction of open series. Relativity-theory is assigned only phenomenological, not metaphysical, significance. Time is more fundamental than space and must in Bergsonian terms be recognized as an irreducible category of reality. The status of past and future is discussed on the basis of the notion of an event, for events alone exist and are always the present. The tendency of the theory is to reinstate an absolutistic, but not the traditional, view of time. Both monistic and rigidly monadistic theories of relations are rejected so as to avoid the "infinite regress" and other difficulties, all traceable to treating relation as if it were an individual, and to escape the reduction of individuals to relations and relations to qualities. The examination of all these ideas is, however, subordinate to, and issues in, a view which is broadly idealist, finitist, and monadistic. It is a view which has special difficulties for the author, for he has to show how causality operates in a monadistic universe and also in a universe recognized by him as organized on higher and lower levels of causality, each unique and containing an element of irreducibility. This notion of different levels combined with finitism leads to

the idea, confirmed also by following out the concept of truth, that there is a lowest and sole underivative level, called by the author the "Omega system," and identified with the Eternal which is reached only in this way and not by way of universals or essences. This Omega system, if materialism is to be avoided, requires to be interpreted as not only the fundamental form of existence but also as the highest, higher than the human, and as conforming to the traditional truth of religion, namely Divine Existence and Providence.

B. M. Laing.

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*History of the Schoolmen.* By E. Crewdson Thomas. (London: Williams & Norgate, Ltd. 1941. Pp. 677. Price 30s. net.)

It is to be regretted that the author of this book, who has obviously devoted to its preparation the careful perusal of many books, did not remain content with the enjoyment and interest which he no doubt derived from his studies without proceeding to the publication of what is in fact no more than a notebook of his reading with an ambitious title suggesting the accomplishment of a task which he had not the equipment necessary for executing in a manner which would render it useful to those whom he presumably had in view. It would be possible, but unprofitable, to occupy space which could be better filled with numerous examples of the errors exhibited by the pages before us. Many of these, it is true, are due to the mistakes of printers and to careless correction of their proofs (conscious of being myself a great offender in this respect, I am disinclined to be severe upon a fellow-sinner—but the correction in this case has been exceptionally careless)—not a few, however, are the result of an ignorance which, in a would-be historian of an important group of thinkers, must be regarded as disqualifying him for the work which he has undertaken. It is sufficient to say that the introductory chapters relating to the Greek philosophers are entirely worthless, and that although Mr. Thomas has not neglected to refer to good authorities; while they are very unnecessarily expanded by the inclusion of long abstracts of certain Aristotelian works (*Metaphysics* △ and the *Nicomachean Ethics*), the information provided by which for an English reader unacquainted with Greek (who indeed would scarcely in any case seek it in a *History of the Schoolmen*) he would find far better given in such books as Sir David Ross's *Aristotle* and *Selections from Aristotle*. The accounts supplied by Mr. Thomas of the mediaeval writers, who are the professed subjects of his history, often consist of passages lifted bodily from his authorities without quotation marks. This procedure is not to be attributed to any intention to deceive on Mr. Thomas's part; for the style at once suggests to any experienced reader that we have to do with borrowed language, and it is easy, by reference to the bibliography prefixed to the book, to trace its *provenance*—but merely to the compiler's failure to distinguish between what is to be looked for in a scholar's memoranda and what in a substantive work based upon the studies of which such memoranda constitute the record. Even as a convenient catalogue of the names of schoolmen for an English student, Mr. Thomas's book is superfluous after the publication of Dr. Messenger's translation of Professor Maurice de Wulf's *History of Mediaeval Philosophy*; though it is fair to say that Mr. Thomas, who mentions this work in his bibliography (under the characteristically misprinted title of *Wulf, M. Histoire de la Philosophie de Mediévale*"), does not depend on M. de Wulf either in his mode of designating the schoolmen whose names occur in both treatises, or in what he says about them; there are even three or four included in his table of contents which are not to be found in M. de Wulf's.

Clement C. J. Webb.

*Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man.* By Thomas Reid. Edited and Abridged by A. D. Woozley. (London: Macmillan and Co. 1941. Pp. xlviii + 456. Price 21s. net.)

Reid who at one time had rather too much fame has now rather too little. It is to be hoped that the present book will check this ebb of his influence.

Part of the reason for the neglect, despite the considerable affinity between Reid's work and a good deal of contemporary or of near-contemporary British philosophy, is the fact that Hamilton's edition of Reid, which ousted all others about a century ago, is unpleasant to read because of its double columns and small print. (The jacket of Mr. Woozley's book, though not Mr. Woozley himself, negligently states that *all* editions have this defect). Another part of the reason is the circumstance that Reid (who was seventy-five when this book first appeared) had become decidedly repetitious.

Mr. Woozley with the help of his publishers has triumphantly overcome the first of these defects. His book is very kind to the reader's eye. He has attempted to overcome the second defect by abridgement—of which more anon.

Mr. Woozley should be warmly congratulated upon the excellence of his forty-page introduction. It is interesting, informative, and judicious, critical and not censorious, with a pleasant sobriety in the praise it gives. It demonstrates Mr. Woozley's mastery of British philosophy and his competence in European. Some of his verdicts, no doubt, might be disputed, for example his contention that Reid's theory of perception "is so obscure and incomplete as hardly to constitute a theory at all." If you combine the beliefs (*a*) that physical objects are not sensed or inferred from sense but are believed, given sensation, but not otherwise; (*b*) that the fact is as ultimate as, say, memory, and although subject to fallibilism has to be accepted by anyone who is not a sceptic; (*c*) that analysis, in principle, here reaches its limit, you have, pretty nearly, Reid's theory. The result may not be very exciting, but I don't think that Mr. Woozley's comment is justified.

Apart from his conscientious supply of references where Reid refers to others, Mr. Woozley is rather sparing of footnotes. It may not always be clear why so reticent an editor does explode into a footnote just when he does. Speaking generally, however, these notes show the same high quality as Mr. Woozley's introduction. (But I don't think them always fortunate. Thus note 2 on p. 70 accusing Reid of "misleading over-simplification" in a reference to Hume has itself the same defect. Again, on p. 198 Reid is said to be "misleading" about Hume and Locke, but in Hume's official sense of "knowledge," as shown, e.g. in the title and entire lay-out of Part III of Book I of the *Treatise*, Reid's statement is not misleading at all, nor is the Lockean origin of this part of Hume's philosophy in dispute.)

Regarding the abridgement, I am not nearly so well content. If one were offering an abridgement, say, of *Mein Kampf* one would, I suppose, be entitled to say as good as nothing about what was excised and to take the responsibility for presenting a continuous narrative. I don't think that is a good plan in the present instance.

So far as I have observed all that Mr. Woozley does in this matter is (*a*) to say that he has cut out "the more otiose of the many repetitions" and that "he has done his best to omit nothing of philosophical importance," (*b*) very rarely to state in a footnote that there has been an omission of arguments to such and such an effect, (*c*) in the table of contents to print in square brackets the titles of all the chapters in Essay VIII, of certain other chapters in other essays and, in one instance, a portion of the title of a chapter. One gathers without much trouble that the square brackets indicate total excision.

A 15 per cent cut, or thereabouts, results, and a further cut in the order of 20 per cent is obtained by omitting series of paragraphs, or single paragraphs, or sometimes, portions of a paragraph. All this, with insignificant exceptions, is done entirely *sub silentio* without dots or asterisks. In the result, quite a bit of research is required in order to find out what has been cut. That seems to me to be a great pity. The use of dots and asterisks wouldn't occupy very many additional pages, and would be very useful (I had almost said essential) to serious students. If it is some other class of students that are being catered for primarily, it seems odd that Mr. Woozley has given them such full measure. The abridgement still makes a pretty long book.

I am sorry to introduce this carping note and admit that I greatly dislike abridged editions though I can find a use for selections. Let me end by saying two things that I forgot to say earlier. The first is that I hope that the revival of interest in Reid's actual text that the present volume is so well fitted to stimulate will lead many to read the *Inquiry* and the *Active Powers* as well as the *Intellectual Powers*. The *Inquiry* is the more vivacious work, and the *Active Powers*, in my opinion, includes much first-rate work. The second thing I forgot to say is that Mr. Woozley's introduction is particularly well-informed regarding the Reid literature and has paid an attention which I believe to be deserved to the recently published *Philosophical Orations of Thomas Reid*, edited by W. R. Humphries, and published as a separate *Study* by the Aberdeen University Press. I mention the fact with some diffidence owing to my local interest in the matter, but I suspect that the existence of this little thing is not very generally known.

JOHN LAIRD.

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*Pragmatism and Pioneering in Benoy Sarkar's Sociology and Economics*. By NAGENDRA NATH CHAUDHURY. (Calcutta: Chuckervertty Chatterjee & Co., Ltd. 1940. Pp. ii + 152. Price Rs. 3.)

The work of Benoy Kumar Sarkar, though not very widely known in England, has had a profound influence on Indian sociology, and has inspired in recent years a number of appreciative studies, of which this is one.

In the early years of this century Sarkar began his career by devoting himself to a programme of national schools sponsored by the National Council of Education of Bengal, and became an exponent of inductive teaching methods in the vernacular. In 1914 he left on a world tour to study social and economic phenomena, and remained abroad for eleven years, paying particular attention to the United States, Germany, France, China, and Japan. The results of his observations and multitudinous personal contacts appeared in a series of thirteen volumes of the *Modern World* (*Varttaman Jagat*), after initial publication in Calcutta and other journals. These did much to stimulate the interest of the Bengal intelligentsia in the economics and culture of the contemporary outside world and to enforce comparison with Indian conditions. At the same time Sarkar played a prominent part in interpreting to the scholars of Western countries the contributions of Hindu culture in science, art, and politics, embodying much of his thought in his later *Positive Background of Hindu Sociology*. Since his return he has used this cosmopolitan outlook in the foundation of research institutes and in the vigorous promotion of industrial, scientific, and cultural changes in Indian society.

In all this work he has aimed at preserving a non-political standpoint, and his approach is described in the book here reviewed as "pragmatic idealism."

His idealism, starting from a frank recognition of India's backwardness—expressed in a series of "equations of comparative industrialism"—proceeds from the assumption that an evolutionary progress is possible, though only from one stage of disequilibrium to another, by utilizing the forces of "creative individualism." He rejects the Marxist analysis of social and economic phenomena, holding, for instance, that poverty cannot ever be finally abolished, but will always remain, though it may change its forms. His pragmatism lays stress on the need for self-help in aiming at social change, and judges the value of effort by the results gained. Believing that backward India is moving essentially along the same economic and social lines as the Western world, and that her major task is to catch up, he is deeply interested in the applications of technical and industrial research to material development and social welfare, and his association with leading industrialists and business men is close.

The book gives a very useful account of Sarkar's life-history, of the influences that have tended to mould his thought and work, and of the stimulus that he has given to Indian social and economic research. One would have welcomed, however, a more thorough-going analysis of Sarkar's exact place in contemporary Indian sociology, and of the degree to which his "pragmatic idealism" fits the facts of present-day Indian political and social conditions. This might well have replaced the eulogistic quotations from reviewers and the long lists of names of eminent persons who have appreciated Sarkar's merits.

RAYMOND FIRTH.

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Books received also:—

L. SUSAN STEBBING. *Ideals and Illusions.* London: Watts & Co. 1941. Pp. xiii + 206. 8s. 6d.

WILLIAM KELLEY WRIGHT. *A History of Modern Philosophy.* New York: The Macmillan Co. 1941. Pp. xvi + 633. 12s. 6d.

RICHARD ROBINSON. *Plato's Earlier Dialectic.* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press. 1941. Pp. viii + 239. 18s. 6d.

PHILIP HOWARD DE LACY and ESTELLE ALLEN DE LACY (ed. by, with translation and commentary). *Philodemus: on Methods of Inference. A Study in Ancient Empiricism.* Philadelphia, Pa.: The American Philological Association. 1941. Pp. viii + 200. Price not quoted.

REGINALD A. SMITH. *Towards a Living Encyclopaedia.* London: Andrew Dakers Ltd. 1942. Pp. 80. 2s.

PAUL ARTHUR SCHILPP (Editor). *The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead* (Volume III in "The Library of Living Philosophers"). Northwestern University, Evanston and Chicago. 1941. Pp. xx + 745. $4.00.

FRANCIS X. MEEHAN. *Efficient Causality in Aristotle and St. Thomas.* Philosophical Studies, Vol. XVI. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press. 1940. Pp. xxii + 424. $2.00.

DESCARTES. *Discours de la Methode,* avec introduction et remarques de Gilbert Gadoffre. Manchester University Press. 1941. Pp. xliii + 94. 3s. 6d.

BARON ERIK PALMSTIERNA. *The World's Crisis and Faiths.* London: John Lane, The Bodley Head. 1942. Pp. 192. 8s. 6d.

V. H. N. RAGHAVENDRACHAR, and A. R. WADIA. *The Dvaita Philosophy and Its Place in the Vedanta.* Mysore: The University of Mysore. 1941. Pp. viii + 282. Rs. 3.

# INSTITUTE NOTES

On Friday, January 23rd, Professor A. D. Ritchie, of Manchester University, gave a lecture entitled "Social Relations of Science." As soon as the next lecture is arranged, members in the Home Counties will receive notice, and the lecture will also be announced in *The Times*.

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These lectures are free to members.

(2) Issues a quarterly philosophical journal (free to members).

(3) Proposes to form a philosophical Library.

(4) Gives guidance and assistance to individuals in their philosophical reading.

(5) Encourages research in Philosophy.

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[*Suggested*]

## FORM OF BEQUEST

I bequeath to THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY the sum of ..... free of duty, to be applied to the purposes of that Institute, and I declare that the receipt of the Honorary Secretary, or other proper officer for the time being of that Institute, shall be sufficient discharge for the same.

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## THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY

*Appeal for New Members and Donations*

THE Council appeals to members to do all in their power to introduce new members in order to extend the benefits of the Institute and to increase its revenue.

The Institute has no endowments, and its work, which includes lecture courses and meetings for discussion in the various Centres, as well as the conduct of the JOURNAL, cannot be carried on from revenue derived solely from subscriptions of £1 1s. per annum. The Council, therefore, appeals for donations, small or large, from sympathizers with the Institute's aims.

# SPECIAL NOTICE

## WAR EMERGENCY

**On account of the need for economy both in the use of paper and in respect of costs of publication, it is proposed during the continuance of the war to publish three issues of PHILOSOPHY yearly, instead of four as hitherto. Future dates of issue will be July, November, and April.**

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THE Editor has been requested by Professor Glenn R. Morrow, of the University of Pennsylvania, to publish the following notice.

### NOTICE

THERE has recently been published a *Dictionary of Philosophy* under the editorship of Dagobert D. Runes. In advance announcements of the *Dictionary* the names of the undersigned appeared in the lists of Associate and Contributing Editors. We objected to the publication of the work in its present form, and some of us made vigorous efforts to persuade Mr. Runes to delay publication until it had been very materially revised. These efforts were to no avail, and the work appeared with full editorial responsibility being assumed by Mr. Runes. It remains, however, a matter of professional embarrassment to us that our names were used in the advance publicity obtained for this work, and we therefore feel obliged to make a public disavowal of any editorial responsibility for it. We desire also to make it clear that we cannot always accept responsibility for our individually signed articles, since in some cases changes have been made without the approval of the author concerned.

C. A. Baylis
A. Cornelius Benjamin
Edgar S. Brightman
Rudolf Carnap
Alonzo Church
G. Watts Cunningham
C. J. Ducasse
Irwin Edman
Hunter Guthrie, S.J.
Julius Kraft
Glenn R. Morrow
Joseph Ratner
Julius R. Weinberg